NEW
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *79-89 Seventh Ave., N. Y.*

No. 507 NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 15, 1906. **Price, Five Cents**

BARE FACED JIMMY, GENTLEMAN BURGLAR

OR

NICK CARTER'S AMAZING EXPERIMENT

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"

With a motion that was as quick as thought, Bare-faced Jimmie leaped to his feet and kicked the tray of dishes and food from Nick Carter's hands.

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *70-89 Seventh Avenue, N. Y. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.*

No. 507. NEW YORK, September 15, 1906. Price Five Cents.

Bare Faced Jimmy, Gentleman Burglar;

OR,

NICK CARTER'S AMAZING EXPERIMENT.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A MOST MYSTERIOUS ROBBERY.

Nick Carter opened the door of the office of the chief of the bureau of detectives, at headquarters, and passed inside; and the inspector, as soon as he recognized who his caller was, rose to greet him.

"I don't know by what method of telepathy you were made acquainted with the fact that I was wishing at that very moment to see you, Nick," he said, "but the fact remains the same that I was."

"All the better," replied the detective. "It is purely an accident, however, that I am here. I happened to be in the neighborhood, I happened to be a trifle leg-weary, I happened to remember that I would be very likely to find you in at this hour, and I happened in. I don't know how it happened—but it happened."

"I was just at that very moment considering whether I would telephone for you, send for you, or go to your house in person to see you."

"It must be something important, inspector, to have given you so much concern as all that," said the detective.

"It is and it isn't, Nick. It's really the work of a new man."

"Eh?" asked Nick.

"I thought I knew the ear-marks of every expert burglar in the town, Nick, but this fellow beats me."

"Oh! You mean that Maxwell robbery?"

"Yes."

"I saw an article about it in the paper this afternoon."

"Then you saw about all that we know about it here at the Central office."

"Is that a fact?"

"It sure is—and some. A strange crook has come to town, Nick—and that's no dream."

"I hope you don't want me to take the case, inspector?"

"I certainly do want you to do that very identical thing, Nick."

"I was going away this afternoon."

"Oh, well, you'll postpone that—if I ask you to do it?"

"I suppose so," laughed the detective. "What is it all about."

"You say you have read what was in the papers this afternoon?"

"In a cursory manner—yes. I didn't pay much attention to it."

"How much did you gather from what you did read?"

"That the Maxwell residence was robbed; that Madam Maxwell's jewels, valued at about a hundred thousand dollars, were stolen; that some negotiable securities which belonged to her husband, now in Europe, were also taken, and that altogether the burglars got away with three or four hundred thousand dollars' worth of swag—and that they left no trace of any kind behind them."

"Correct."

"Do you mean to say that you know no more about it than that?"

"Exactly."

"Who are these Maxwells? I don't happen to know about them, inspector."

"They are new to the town. I don't know about them, either."

"Where do they come from?"

"They sort of blew in, I think. Everybody seems to know them, and nobody seems to know anything about them."

"Well, tell me what you do know about them, inspector."

"It is very little. They have lived in town about a month. Before that, they were in Newport for awhile. I have heard that they were also at Lenox. Their appearance in society was very quiet and unostentatious. They didn't butt in at all—they sort of fell in."

"I don't think that I quite follow you," said Nick.

"Well, through an agent they rented one of the finest residences in Newport; they went there to live in the height of the Newport season. They appeared to have money to burn. Mr. Paran Maxwell is a tall, distinguished-looking man, who would attract attention anywhere, I am told."

"You have never seen him?"

"No."

"Go on."

"Mrs. Paran Maxwell is a very beautiful woman, who dresses with exquisite taste—and there is a Miss Maxwell, who is a sister of the head of the family, who is reported also to be surprisingly beautiful."

"Is that the entire family?"

"Yes."

"Go ahead, then."

"I should suppose you would rather I would tell you about the robbery and——"

"No; I would prefer to hear about the family first."

"Well, as I say, they appeared in Newport at the height of the season. They lived very quietly. They didn't butt in or try to butt in. They kept severely to themselves and waited for society to do the butting-in—which society presently did; curiosity got the best of society, you see."

"Yes. I suppose that some of the leading members called upon the Maxwells; eh?"

"Something like that. At all events, they were gradually taken into the bosom of affairs, and speedily became the center of everything—and all that with the air of really preferring to keep out of it, 'don'tcherknow.'"

"It sounds as if that was the very thing they were playing for," said the detective. "I don't know whether it is your intention to give it that appearance or not, but that is the impression you convey, inspector."

"It is the impression I mean to convey—for that is the way I feel about it."

"Well, go ahead, then."

"That is all there is to go ahead with—about the family. But there are some other things that are associated with what you already know which haven't leaked out upon the public ear yet."

"Yes?" said Nick.

"The Maxwell residence was not the only one that was robbed."

"Eh? Is that so?"

"Precisely."

"How many victims were there? And why haven't we heard about the others?"

"There were three all together—and the others reported the robberies quietly to the police, with the request that nothing whatever be said about their own losses, inasmuch as the Maxwell robbery was already known, and there was no doubt that all three were committed by the same men."

"Who were the other two victims?"

"The Carrolls and the Lackayes."

"Eh? About the richest people in the Newport set?"

"Yes."

"Were their losses heavy?"

"Remarkably heavy. The two together amounted to more than a million."

"You don't mean it!"

"I do, though."

"A rather big haul for one night's work, inspector."

"I should say so!"

"What was taken from the Carrolls, and the Lackayes?"

"Jewels, cash, and a considerable quantity of solid gold."

"Solid gold?"

"Yes. The Lackayes owned a dinner-service of solid gold, which was valued at more than a hundred thousand dollars. It has disappeared. There were many gold ornaments about the house, too; old man Lackaye had

a passion for things made of gold, and kept an awful lot of it around him. To-day not one of those articles is left to him."

"Humph!"

"I don't know whether you ever heard about it or not, but Stuyvesant Carroll always kept an enormous sum of money in the house. The night of the robbery was not an exception. He had hundreds of thousands of dollars locked in his safe that night. In the morning it wasn't there."

"But——"

"The family jewels were also kept in that safe. His wife's diamonds, his daughter's diamonds, and so forth—the entire boodle of the household was deposited in that safe at night. In the morning none of it was there."

"And the safe?"

"Eh? The safe?"

"Yes. What about the safe? Was it blown open, or——"

The inspector calmly lighted a cigar before he replied, delaying the operation to as great length as possible, as if to give what he had to say all the more impressiveness. Then he said:

"The safe wasn't blown open. The safe did not look as if it had been opened at all. The safe was locked, and, apparently, in the condition in which it was left at night, when it was closed—*but, all the same, everything of value had been taken from it.*"

"Proving that it was opened by making use of the combination, eh?"

"Yes. There is a time-lock on the safe, but——"

"What! A time-lock?"

"Yes; but it has never been used since the safe, or vault, was built into the house. Mr. Carroll explained to me that his wife had once been very much annoyed because the time-lock prevented her from wearing certain jewels in which she wished to appear, and that since that event the time-lock had not been used at all. They had always considered the vault as perfectly secure without that device. And by Jove, Nick, you would think it was, to look at it."

"So those three houses were robbed last night, eh?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

"And only the robbery at Maxwell's has been reported?"

"Officially reported—yes."

"I noticed by the paper that the Maxwell house is on upper Fifth Avenue, fronting the park. Where are the other two houses located?"

"Maxwell's house stands between the two."

"Oh. I see. It is a case of three in a row, eh?"

"Yes."

"Do you know which house was robbed first?"

"I do not; neither does anybody else."

"Do you mean to tell me——"

"Look here, Nick, what I mean to tell you is this: Those three houses were entered and robbed. The burglars left no trace inside or outside of any of them which will tell how they entered or left the premises. They did not disturb a soul in any of the three houses. It was not known that there had been a robbery, at any one of the three, until people were stirring in the morning. The whole thing is a mystery, as great and as deep as any I ever knew about. It's worse than a murder mystery, for there you at least have a body to go by. Here, there is nothing."

CHAPTER II.

WATCH-DOGS WHICH DID NOT WATCH.

"I suppose you have visited the houses in person this morning, haven't you?" asked the detective of the inspector.

"No. I haven't."

"So, what you have told me is merely what has been reported to you?"

"It is what has been reported to me by my men, and what has been told to me by Hinsdale Carroll and Boynton Lackaye."

"Do you mean that those two gentlemen have been here to the office to see you to-day?"

"Yes. They came together."

"When?"

"At two o'clock this afternoon. About an hour ago."

"Was that the first you knew that *their* houses had been robbed?"

"Yes."

"And had you already heard about the robbery at the Maxwell house?"

"Yes."

"How and when did you hear about that one?"

"It was reported at the police-station early this morning."

"Who reported it?"

"The butler."

"What is his name?"

"Crimmins. First name, Adolph."

"I suppose he was sent to the station-house by his mistress?"

"I suppose so."

"Take up the story from that point, inspector, will you?"

"From Crimmins going to the station-house?"

"Yes."

"Well, he shot in there about half-past six this morning and told the sergeant that their house had been robbed during the night. He asked that an officer be sent around to investigate."

"Well?"

"It happened that the captain entered the station-house while Crimmins was talking, and so he went around in person, taking two of his best men with him. They found about what I have already described—that is, about what you read in the papers this afternoon."

"But they heard nothing about the other robberies?"

"Not a word."

"What have you done about it yourself, inspector?"

"Nothing. I had another matter on hand to-day, and I did not get to my office until about an hour before you came in. As I told you, I was just thinking of sending for you, or going after you with the idea that we would visit the three houses together."

"All right; but let's get rid of a few more questions first."

"I will answer anything I can, Nick."

"Did I understand you to say that Mr. Paran Maxwell is now in Europe?"

"Yes."

"Been away some time?"

"So I was led to understand."

"Is he known to be a rich man, inspector?"

"I suppose so. He certainly should be a rich man to live in the house he occupies, and to keep in the company he does."

"Have you ever seen the man?"

"No; but what has he got to do with it? He is in Europe."

"But he was robbed?"

"Sure."

"Let's get down to the point where the two men called on you—Carroll and Lackaye."

"All right."

"They came together?"

"Yes."

"One of them acted as spokesman for both, I suppose; eh?"

"Rather, I should say, that they both talked at once."

"Tell me something about that call. Anything that impressed you."

"I think that I was chiefly impressed with the reluctance each of them had to having the intelligence that they had been robbed get into the papers. Old Carroll said that he would rather lose as much more than to have it all aired in the public print."

"And I suppose Lackaye felt about the same, eh?"

"Yes."

"Were they aware of the fact that the Maxwell residence had also been robbed?"

"Yes."

"I suppose they saw the policemen go there this morning?"

"Yes; and afterward they made inquiries."

"But they kept still about their own affairs?"

"You bet. Trust that sort of people to do that. They do dread anything which attracts the attention of crooks to them. I suppose if Maxwell had been at home, he would have kept that robbery at his house secret, too. At least, he would not have sent the butler around to the police-station."

"The queer thing about this whole affair, inspector—that is, the one that impresses me—is that all three of the houses were entered, according to what you have told me, without the burglars leaving any trace of their means of entrance."

"Exactly—and it means, doesn't it, that the burglars entered with a key, *or were admitted to the houses by some person who was already inside.*"

"I suppose you mean by that, that a servant in one of the houses was in collusion with a servant in each of the other houses, and that the three, perhaps assisted by an outside party, did the work?"

"That is the way it looks to me, Nick."

"And if you pursued that theory, you would say, also, that a servant in each one of the houses was enabled somehow to acquire knowledge of the necessary combinations—— By the way, how many safes were opened in the mysterious manner you have described as that pertaining to the Lackaye house?"

"Three. One in each house."

"That is rather an important point, isn't it, inspector?"

"It certainly is a puzzling point."

"It would serve to carry out your theory that servants were in collusion in the three houses, wouldn't it?"

"I should say that it certainly would do that."

"Let us reason about it. How would servants acquire the necessary knowledge?"

"In reference to the combinations, you mean?"

"Certainly. It would be easy enough for them to enter the houses; but how would any of them previously have learned the combination of their masters' strong-boxes?"

"I'll have to throw up my hands at that. My theory ends there."

"What was Mr. Carroll's idea about it?"

"He didn't have any ideas at all—on any subject."

"And Lackaye's?"

"He was about in the same boat."

"Did either of them suspect any of their servants?"

"No."

"Did you question them on the subject?"

"Certainly."

"And I suppose that each of them stated positively that it would be absolutely impossible for any servant in their employ to have learned the combinations of their safes?"

"They did."

"Did you learn that there were any evidences at all, about the houses, that burglars had been there during the night, save that one—that property had been stolen?"

"Oh, yes. There were burnt matches around on the floors; one of the burglars forgot his pocket electric

searchlight—a thing which most of them use nowadays, you know."

"Yes."

"This one was old and much worn. It showed that it had done considerable service."

"But, all the same, that makes me wonder why they used matches at all, if they were provided with pocket-lights."

"I had thought of that."

"Well?"

"It impressed me as merely being proof that there were two, or, possibly, three burglars in the houses at the same time; that only one of them possessed a pocket-light, and that the others had to use matches."

"But if they were servants who were employed in the houses, they would scarcely have to use either, would they?"

"I don't know about that."

"The premises would be entirely familiar to them; the habits of the members of each household would be as an open book to them; they would know the location of the lights inside the house. They would have known which door squeaked and which did not, and would already have oiled those that did."

"That is all very true."

"So it would follow that either the burglars were *not* servants in the houses that were robbed, or that the burnt matches and the pocket-light were left where they were found for a blind."

"That is true, too."

"That gold service that you have mentioned must have been rather heavy."

"Yes; but I guess three men could carry it away, all right—if they had time enough. But, say, Nick!"

"Well?"

"There is one rather important point that I haven't mentioned yet."

"What is that?"

"In each of those three houses there is a bulldog. Fact."

"What! Three bulldogs?"

"Yes. One in each house."

"Where are they now? Dead?"

"Oh, no. They are there yet."

"Do you mean that not one of the three dogs raised an alarm?"

"Yes."

"And do you know if the dogs were where they might have done so? Where they might have heard or seen the burglars at work?"

"Carroll and Lackaye both insist that the dogs in their houses were accustomed to having the run of the parlor floor at night. Each slept in a basket provided for him, in the front halls of the houses, and neither of them raised an alarm. Doesn't that support my theory about the servants?"

"It certainly strengthens it."

"I think that instead of talking here, we had better go up there together, don't you?"

"Yes. If you are ready, we will go now."

Somewhat later, as they were approaching the residences that had been robbed, the detective said to the inspector:

"I think we will leave the Maxwell residence till the last."

And a moment later they were shown into the library of the residence of Boynton Lackaye.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURGLARS BIG HAUL.

The two officers found Mr. Lackaye at home.

Although he was a very rich man, possessed of many millions, the loss of many hundred thousand dollars in cash, to say nothing of an immense amount in jewels and other valuables that had gone with the money, had disturbed him so that he confessed to the detectives that he found it impossible to keep his mind on his business that day.

It had been agreed between the inspector and Nick Carter, before they entered the house, that Nick would take the initiative and do the questioning, and that the inspector would act the part of the observant one; and so, after Nick had been introduced to the millionaire, he said:

"Before we go into the details of this affair, Mr. Lackaye, I would like to look the ground over. Will you ring for your butler, or for your valet?"

"Certainly. Which do you prefer to have?"

"I suppose you harbor no suspicions against either of them, do you?" asked Nick, in reply.

"I certainly do not. Both have been in my service a long time. I have implicit confidence in each of them."

"In that case either will answer my purpose."

The millionaire rang for his valet, who soon appeared.

"Now, Mr. Lackaye," said the detective, rising, "I will leave you here with the inspector while I look over the premises;" a moment later he followed the valet from the room.

Outside, in the hall, he asked the valet:

"Who was the first to discover that a robbery had been committed, Ferguson?"

"I was the first to discover that the house had evidently been entered, sir."

"How was that?"

"Mr. Lackaye rises early in the morning. He rides in the park before breakfast, always, so as a rule I am the first of the household to be astir."

"Yes."

"I discovered burned matches on the floor of the breakfast-room as I was passing through it."

"Many?"

"I picked up six, sir."

"What did you do about it?"

"I informed the butler at once, telling him that I suspected that burglars had been in the house."

"And then——"

"He hastened at once to the place where the gold service is kept, for that has always been a great care to him. It had disappeared."

"Where was it kept?"

"In a big iron or steel safe that was built expressly for it."

"Was it kept there by itself?"

"Practically; although some of the choicest of the silver was usually locked in the safe with it."

"Was the silver also taken?"

"No; it was not touched. Only the gold was taken."

"The burglars were discriminating, weren't they?"

"Yes, sir."

"How does that safe lock? With a combination?"

"No, sir. With a key."

"How was it opened on this occasion?"

"With the key."

"Who had charge of that key?"

"Compton, the butler."

"Where was the key when Compton went to find if the gold service had been stolen?"

"It was in the lock of the safe."

"And it was Compton's key?"

"Yes, sir. His own was missing from its place."

"Where was, or is, its place? Where does Compton keep it?"

"In his trousers' pocket, sir."

"And was it in its accustomed place when he retired last night?"

"He says it was. The safe containing the gold service had not been opened in two weeks or more, but Compton says he knows that the key was in his pocket when he went to bed."

"When you told Compton that you thought burglars had been in the house during the night, what was the first thing that he said or did?"

"He clapped his hand into his pocket in search of that key, and he exclaimed: 'The key is gone!' Then he turned and ran for the gold safe as we call it, and I after him."

"And you found the key in the lock?"

"Yes."

"Was the door of the safe open, or closed?"

"Partly closed, or partly open, whichever way you choose to put it."

"When it was discovered that the valuable gold service had been stolen, what was the next thing that was done?"

"I left Compton, wringing his hands and weeping in front of the safe, and went at once and told Mr. Lackaye what had happened."

"What was done then?"

"We went together to his private library—he calls it his home-office—for he remembered instantly that he had an unusually large amount of money there, at the time."

"Yes? Go on."

"We both expected to find the door of the vault in that room blown to pieces, but it looked as if it had not been touched. He told me to turn the handle and see if the door would open, and I did so."

"The inspector tells me that it was not only closed—but was locked."

"It was, sir."

"What then."

"Mr. Lackaye exclaimed that the burglars had not dared to tackle that safe—it is really a vault, sir, built into the house—and that, at least, the cash was safe. We turned away, then, and searched the rest of the house."

"You did not discover at once that the vault had been rifled, eh?"

"No; not until a hour later."

"What else was missing?"

"We supposed that nothing else had been taken, sir, until we opened the vault."

"There were some jewels taken, weren't there?"

"Yes; but they were in the vault in the office-room."

"I see."

"It was about an hour later, I think, that Mr. Lackaye opened the vault. He had seemed to dread to do it, although he was sure that nobody could have entered it. But the fact that we found a pocket electric light on the floor in front of it made him nervous."

"So that is where the light was found, eh?"

"Yes."

"What was the condition of the interior of the vault when it was opened? Were you there at the time?"

"I was."

"Answer the other question, now."

"The small doors of the inside compartments were wide open. These were provided with small, flat keys, but the keys were never taken from the locks for the reason that it was considered to be impossible for any person to get beyond the outside door."

"And the money was gone?"

"The money was gone; the jewels were gone; some negotiable securities were gone. There was missing nine hundred thousand dollars in cash, more than two hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewels, and about a

hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the securities I have mentioned."

"So that, including the gold service, the burglars got away with approximately a million and a quarter in value."

"Yes, sir."

"Where is that office-room located?"

"In an extension at the rear of the house, sir."

"On this floor?"

"Yes."

"What is the location of Mr. Lackaye's sleeping-room?"

"Directly over it. He likes that room because it is quiet and cool in summer."

"Where do you sleep?"

"In a smaller room adjoining his. It is in the same extension."

"Is there a communicating door between them?"

"No, sir. I have to pass into the hall before entering his room."

"Did either of you hear any noise during the night?"

"Not a sound, sir."

"Did anybody else in the house hear any noise?"

"No, sir. At least, that is what they all say."

"I have been told that you keep a dog here."

"Yes. A bulldog; a very cross one, too. He is devoted to the butler and to me, and he tolerates Mr. Lackaye; but he will have nothing to do with any one else."

"Where does that dog sleep at night?"

"In the foyer, sir. There is a basket there for him, near the chimney-piece."

"Did the dog sleep there last night?"

"He did."

"You are sure of it?"

"I am this sure of it: I was the last one in this part of the house to retire, and I took the dog to his basket myself. He was there when I came down in the morning—at the time I discovered the matches about on the floor—and he came out of the basket and wagged his tail and otherwise demonstrated the fact that he was glad to see me."

"He did not bark during the night?"

"If he did so, I did not hear him, sir."

"How do you account for the fact that he did not?"

"I cannot account for it, sir, any more than I can explain the opening of the door of the vault in the office-room."

"Where is the dog now?"

"I suppose he is in another part of the house—downstairs somewhere."

"I wish you would find him and bring him to me."

"Certainly, sir."

"And bring Compton, too, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"But first, before you go after them I wish you to conduct me to the safe where the gold service was kept and also to the office-room. After that—when you have found the dog—you can wait here, where we are now, until I rejoin you."

"Very well, sir."

The valet led the way through the great dining-room of the house, to a room beyond and behind the butler's pantry, and pointed out the place where the gold service had been kept. Then he led the detective to the office-room of the house.

"You may leave me here," said the detective. "I see that the door of the vault is ajar, and I will not need you again until I am through here. You can meet me in the hallway, as I told you."

CHAPTER IV.

WITH NOT A CLUE IN SIGHT.

When the detective entered the "office-room," he closed and locked the door behind him.

He was already beginning to recognize the nucleus of a theory—and it was not the same as that held by the inspector—although it had not yet taken sufficient form to afford him much confidence in it.

The room was apparently in perfect order.

The pocket electric light that had been found there had been placed on a table in the middle of the room, and the detective picked it up and examined it.

It was of the ordinary pattern; of the sort that is usually termed "vest-pocket lantern," oblong in shape. Duplicates of it may be found in windows along any street where stores abound.

It was much worn by friction from the pocket where it had been carried, and when Nick pressed the button and looked at the bulb at the same time, he discovered that it gave forth no responsive light.

"So," he mused, "that is why the matches were used. It explains also why this article was forgotten, and, therefore, left behind. It further suggests that this room is about the first one that the robbers visited, and that the light failed while they—or possibly only one—were here.

"Two things are mighty plain in connection with this affair: One is, that the robber, or robbers, were perfectly familiar with the interior of the house, and the other is that he or they were likewise on familiar terms with the dog.

"It's a cinch that no one could walk into the house in the manner they did it, and make instant friends with that dog, no matter how many horse's fetlocks they might have rubbed before they came."

He dropped the lantern into one of his pockets and crossed the floor to the vault.

The interior was provided with several electric-light

bulbs, and it was plain that here, at least, the burglar had needed neither his pocket light nor matches.

He could have partly closed the vault door and then easily have provided himself with all the light he required by merely snapping a switch.

Some of the compartments of the vault contained papers which had not been taken. There were also some old books—ledgers and the like—and there was a case of pigeon-holes containing letters and other papers. It was evident that these had not been touched.

But the interior of the safe showed nothing more that was interesting.

It had been opened, it had been rifled—that was all.

The detective passed outside again, and closed and locked the door; and after that he spent almost half an hour in trying to work the combination by sound, with his ear close against the dial.

But, although he was an acknowledged expert in this practise, his half-hour of work failed to produce any results, and he abandoned the attempt.

"I could do it," he mused, as he turned away. "I could do it if I took the time, but I would have to work over it five or six hours—until I had thoroughly learned every sound inside that lock—before I could accomplish it. And I will bet a good deal that there is not another man who could do it any quicker than I could."

In this way he satisfied himself that the vault door had not been opened by a lock expert who had done it by ear; and he smiled grimly when he muttered to himself:

"It would appear as if the vault was opened by a miracle, or that the old millionaire walked and acted in his sleep.

"However, I won't get off my trolley yet. I'll pursue my first idea to the end."

He devoted a few minutes more to a minute examination of the room, and at last satisfied that there was absolutely nothing which could be dignified by the name of a clue, he left it, and made his way to the smaller one behind the butler's pantry, where the "gold safe" was kept.

The safe was open.

It was also empty, save for the silver that the valet had mentioned, and Nick smiled when he saw it.

In value it, of course, did not approximate to what the gold had been worth, and most of it was of a character difficult to dispose of, save through the process of melting.

The burglars had evidently determined that it was not worth the trouble to remove, in the face of all the other values they had obtained.

Here, as in the office-room, there were no clues.

On the floor, scattered about in front of the safe, the detective found three burned matches which the butler had not found when he cleaned up the place. It was that mania for clearing up which had removed any clues, if there had been some there.

The key was still in the lock of the safe, and it was rather a large one, although of the flat order. The detective dropped it into one of his pockets and returned to the hall where he had parted with the valet.

He found him there awaiting him, and with him was the butler; but the dog was not present.

"Where is the dog?" was his first question, as he approached them.

"He is not to be found," replied the valet. "Compton says he let him outside about two this afternoon, as is his habit, and the dog has not returned."

"Humph!" said Nick. "Was he let outside before, to-day?"

"Yes, sir, this morning at ten," replied Compton.

"Does he usually remain out as long as this?"

"No, sir. Usually some one watches him while he is out. I did so this morning. I think he must have been forgotten this afternoon. But I think he will return."

"Do you?"

"Yes. Once before he wandered away and was gone from ten in the morning until dark; but at that time he was back again, asleep on the front steps."

"Let us hope that he will return this time, and, if he does, you are not to let him out of your sight again until I have seen him. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

Nick produced the key he had taken from the "gold safe."

"Is this the same key you have been in the habit of carrying?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you have it in your pocket when you retired last night?"

"I did."

"How do you *know* that you did?"

"Because it was the last thing to which I gave my attention."

"How is that?"

"When I go to my room to retire, my first act after I get there is always to wind my watch, and my next one—I call it the last one—is to feel in my pocket to see if that key is safe."

"It was there, was it, when you went to bed last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was in the lock of the safe just now; how was that?"

"I thought it best to leave the safe, sir, just as I found it."

"I wish you had thought to leave the floor in the same condition."

"I don't understand, sir."

"How many burned matches did you clear up, there?"

"None at all. There were three there, but I left them where they were."

"So you did no clearing up at all in that room?"

"Not at all, sir."

"The valet tells me that both you and he were friends with the dog."

"Yes, sir."

"And now the dog is missing. It is too bad, Compton, for it might make some people suspect you, in this matter."

"My master would never suspect me, sir, no matter what others might do," replied the butler, with dignity. "Ferguson and myself are both above caring what other people might think as long as we have the confidence of our master."

"That is a very good position for you to take. All the same, I wish we could find that bulldog."

"So do I, sir; but I think he will return."

"Somehow, I do not think so. Tell me something about that dog."

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you had him here?"

"Since last summer, sir. We got him while we were in Newport."

"How did you get him? Who bought him?"

"Why, it was this way: Mr. Maxwell——"

"Who?"

"Mr. Maxwell, who lives next door to us, sir."

"Oh, yes. Well, go on."

"It seems that Mr. Maxwell bought a dog for himself and that Mr. Lackaye, my master, admired the dog very much and said that he wished he had one, too. Then Mr. Maxwell told Mr. Lackaye that the man he bought his dog from had others, and he would drive his machine around to the place the following day and find out if there were any more. The next afternoon I happened to be out in the grounds with my master when Mr. Maxwell drove up with Rip."

"Is that his name? Rip?"

"Yes, sir. Rip is his name, and Tear is the name of Mr. Maxwell's dog, and the one that Mr. Carroll has got——"

"Hello! Has he got a bulldog, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"One of the same breed?"

"I think so, sir. Mr. Maxwell got all three of the dogs at the same place. Mr. Carroll has one, we have the other, and Mr. Maxwell the third one—or, rather, it was the first one."

"And they are Rip and Tear, and—what is the other one's name?"

"Tumble, sir."

"Rip, and Tear, and Tumble. Euphonious names, to be sure. Did Mr. Maxwell procure all three of the dogs?"

"I am not sure of that. I think that when Mr. Carroll saw our dog and Mr. Maxwell's, he said he wanted one also, and that Mr. Maxwell agreed to take him around to the place to find out if there was another one to be had. That is my understanding of the matter."

"Are the dogs just alike?"

"I have been informed that they are brothers, sir, but they do not look very much alike, for all that."

"And Rip was usually cross, was he?"

"Cross to strangers, but a perfectly trained house dog. I have become very fond of him, although with the exception of Ferguson and me, he doesn't take to anybody at all. The other servants are afraid of him."

"Where does the dog stay during the day?"

"Usually with me, sir; or he goes out for a walk with Ferguson, sometimes. At night, he always sleeps in his basket near the chimney piece."

"Yes. I know that. I wonder why he wasn't cross with the burglars, Compton?"

"I have been thinking about that, sir, and I can find only one answer."

"What is the answer?"

"They must have found a way to drug him before they entered the house."

"Nonsense, Compton! They could not do that."

"I don't know, sir. I have heard about such things. I have heard about blowing chloroform through a keyhole, and such things; and, anyhow, I am satisfied that something of the kind must have been done to me, for otherwise they could never have stolen that key from my pocket."

CHAPTER V.

THE ONLY MAN ALIVE WHO KNOWS.

The detective told the butler and the valet that he was going down again to the library to finish his interview with Mr. Lackaye, and that while he was there he would be pleased if they would make some effort to find the dog.

"I have looked pretty thoroughly over the house," he told the master of it, "and I have succeeded in discovering very little. I suppose it is your opinion, Mr. Lackaye, that the burglars came in at the main entrance?"

"I think there is no doubt of that," was the reply. "The servants and myself together examined every part of the house thoroughly this morning, to find where they had entered; but we could find nothing. The front door is the only place where they could have entered."

"Are there no extra fastenings put upon it at night?"

"No; there used to be; but of late years that precaution has been neglected."

"You were not conscious of hearing any noise in the night?"

"No; not at all."

"Did you awake in the night at all?"

"I do not remember that I did, Mr. Carter."

"Who, besides yourself, is aware of the combination of that safe?"

"You mean the vault in my office-room?"

"Yes."

"I am the only person who knows the combination."

"You, of course, and the man who set it for you, eh?"

"I am the only living human being who knows what that combination is, for I set it myself. It takes four numbers to open it. I used to put on the time-lock, but it proved a nuisance two or three times, and I discontinued the practise. I think now that I will resume it."

"I suppose," said Nick, sticking to the subject he was pursuing, "you keep a memorandum of the combination somewhere, don't you?"

"I do not."

"Not even locked away in your compartment at some safe-deposit vault?"

"There is no such memorandum in existence, sir."

"Suppose that something should happen to you, how would your executors get into the safe?"

"They would have to send for the people who made the safe, to open it for them, or they would have to blow it open—unless, indeed, they could do the same as these burglars have done."

"There are experts," said Nick, "who could open the safe—finally; but they would have to work ceaselessly at it for many hours. The lock is an unusually good one."

"So I was told at the time it was made."

"You tell me that you set the present combination, yourself? When did you do that?"

"I think it was about a month ago that I changed it."

"Why did you change it at that time?"

"It has been my practise to alter it once a year ever since the vault was built and the steel door hung in front of it."

"Have you a good reason for that habit?"

"It is merely a precaution."

"Against what?"

"You seem to be strangely persistent on that point, sir."

"I wish to know why you cannot retain the secret of the combination for ten years, or twenty years, as well as for one year."

"I could do that."

"Then why do you not do it?"

"Because it is my pleasure to do otherwise, I suppose. It is merely a habit, that is all. I do the same at my office; I really suppose that is why I do it here."

"Have you ever discussed this subject with any of your acquaintances?"

"I may have done so. I do not recall such a circumstance just now."

"Have you ever opened the vault when another was present in the room with you?"

"I have done it frequently when my wife was present. I have done it, I suppose, in the presence of Ferguson. I do not think that any other, or others, have seen me open the safe."

"Has either of your two friends who were robbed last night ever been in the room with you when you have had occasion to open the safe?"

"Who do you mean? Maxwell and Carroll?"

"Yes; either of them."

"I don't think so. Why?"

"It was merely a question. By the way, Mr. Maxwell is out of the city, I am told."

"He is in Europe—yes."

"His family is at home?"

"His wife and his sister are at home. That is the only family he has."

"How long has he been away?"

"About two weeks. He is expected home again soon; in another week or two, I believe."

"Is he an old friend, Mr. Lackaye?"

"No; comparatively a new one. I have known him only about a year."

"A pleasant acquaintance, I suppose?"

"He is one of the finest fellows I ever met. He is only half my age, but we are quite companionable, all the same."

"It was through Mr. Maxwell, was it not, that you procured your bulldog?"

"Oh! Rip? Yes."

"Are you fond of the dog?"

"My dear Mr. Carter, will you tell me what in the devil's name all this has to do with the theft of almost a million dollars from my house? Or, quite a million, in fact?"

"My dear Mr. Lackaye," replied the detective imperturbably, "I get my information by devious methods. Sometimes I ask questions which seem to have no bearing at all upon the subject at issue. Frequently they do not have any, and in that case they are asked merely for the purpose of freeing the mind from other impediments before I touch upon another subject. May I ask again if you are fond of the dog?"

"To tell you the truth, I am not. He is a surly brute; surly to me and to my friends, although I have never known him to really offer to bite anybody."

"Is he friendly with Mr. Carroll and Mr. Maxwell?"

"He tolerates Carroll, but he hasn't a bit of use for Maxwell. Neither Carroll's dog nor mine like Maxwell—and, strangely enough, Maxwell's dog cannot endure either of us."

"The three dogs are supposed to be brothers, are they not?"

"I suppose so. I really know very little about it. I secured him for a watch-dog, but now I think I shall get rid of him at once."

"He gave no alarm whatever, did he?"

"No alarm that anybody heard."

"Do you know where he was purchased?"

"Eh? Yes. Somewhere just out from Newport."

The detective turned to the inspector and said:

"It might not be a bad idea to send one of your men to Newport, and have him find out if the man who formerly owned these dogs has been away from home lately."

The inspector nodded, and Nick turned again to the millionaire.

"You have discussed this robbery with Mr. Carroll, haven't you?"

"We discussed nothing else this forenoon, sir."

"His dog conducted itself in the same manner that yours did; no?"

"Precisely."

"He also lost a considerable amount by the robbery, did he not?"

"He lost a duplicate set of gold service. I got mine first, and he admired it so much that about a year later he ordered a duplicate of it. The only difference between the two sets was the monogram. He also lost some jewels. I think his losses will foot up about two hundred and fifty thousand."

"You do not wish that any intelligence of your loss should get into the papers, do you?"

"I emphatically do not."

"Why?"

"Because such information invariably turns the attention of the crooks of the city in the direction of Fifth Avenue. I prefer to have them forget me."

"You have no suggestion to offer as to how the burglars became aware of the combination of your vault door?"

"Not one."

"Or as to how it happens that they were so familiar with the interior of your house?"

"Not one."

"There is no servant in your house concerning whom you feel any suspicion?"

"There is not one. I am *sure* that none of my servants know anything about it."

"Are you equally sure concerning the servants of your neighbors?"

"Certainly not. I profess only to be satisfied about my own. But I will say that Carroll feels the same about his servants that I do about mine."

"And how about Mr. Maxwell's?"

"I know nothing whatever about them."

"Has it occurred to you as somewhat remarkable that the robbers should not only have been aware of the location of the safe where the gold service was kept, but that also they should have known that the key to that safe was in the pocket of your butler?"

"It had not occurred to me."

"I will ask you again if you are quite sure of Compton?"

"I would trust him this minute with anything I have got; so would I do with Ferguson, my valet."

"The several members of your family are not at home now, are they?"

"No. They are at Lakewood."

"I don't think that we need trouble you any further to-day, Mr. Lackaye, but I shall probably call upon you again within a few days."

"You haven't much more idea about the burglary than I have, have you?" asked the millionaire, with something that resembled a sneer on his fine old face.

"No, sir, to tell you the truth, I have not. It is, at present, what we call a blind case; but somewhere, hidden away inside of your intelligence, there is a clue, and that is what I wish to find."

"Inside of *my* intelligence? What the devil do you mean by that?"

"I mean that the man who opened your vault door could not have done so without possessing knowledge of the combination; I mean that you being the only man, according to your own belief, who knows even at this moment what that combination is, there must have been a time within the past month—that is, since you have changed it—when you have betrayed that information to another."

"But that is pre——"

"You are not aware of it, of course, but it is the only way of explaining the situation."

"But I tell you that I am the only person alive who knows that combination. There isn't any other. There cannot be any other."

"Then you are the man who opened the vault last night," said Nick quietly.

"What the dev——"

"Wait. The man who opened that vault last night knew the combination, didn't he?"

"Why, yes—he must——"

"Then, if you are the *'onliest'* man who knows it, you must be the man who did it. I don't think you *are* the man who did it, and hence there must be another man besides yourself, who knows it. I think that you know who that other man is without realizing that you do know it, and I hope that by searching around in your memory, you may dig up the clue I want."

CHAPTER VI.

THEORIES WHICH DO NOT FIT.

When Nick and the inspector were leaving the house, they met Compton and Ferguson returning from their fruitless hunt for the dog, for they had found no sign of him at all.

But Ferguson had other information which he proceeded to impart at once.

"There is an odd thing about the disappearance of Rip, sir," he said. "Tear has gone, too."

"Do you mean Carroll's dog?"

"Yes."

"When did he disappear?"

"About the same time as Rip. They were let out at the same time, and neither of them has been seen since. They must have wandered away together."

"Possibly."

"They were in the habit of playing together."

"How about Tumble? Has he disappeared, too?"

"Yes, sir. I saw him through the window of Mr. Maxwell's house when I went out."

"At least," said Nick to the inspector, "there is one dog that we can interview."

"I feel very much like Lackaye did," replied the inspector.

"How is that?"

"What in blazes have the dogs got to do with it?"

"I begin to think that they have a great deal to do with it, inspector. Wait, Ferguson, I want to ask you a few more questions."

"Yes, sir."

"Are you, or are any of the servants in your household, on terms of intimacy with any of the servants in the Maxwell house?"

"We know them mostly by sight, but I think that is all."

"And the Carroll's servants?"

"The answer would be the same, sir."

"Were you ever in the office-room with Mr. Lackaye when he opened the door of the vault?"

"Often, sir."

"Did it ever occur to you to watch him and see what the combination was?"

"No, sir. And I couldn't have seen it I had tried. The figures, if you noticed them, are very small. I know that you do not suspect me, sir. You are only trying to determine if anybody could see the combination while he was working it."

"Yes."

"I don't think it would be possible. Mr. Lackaye is quite near-sighted. He gets quite close to the dial when he uses it, and I don't think anybody could see past him without leaning directly over his shoulder."

"Take your record," said the detective, "and put down my telephone number. If the dog returns, or is found—if either of them turns up—notify me at once, will you?"

"I will, sir."

Hinsdale Carroll was at home when they entered, and Nick found him to be a middle-aged, genial man who laughed whenever there was anything to laugh at, and who seemed to have done nothing but enjoy life ever since he was born.

"I am not going to look for clues in your house, Mr. Carroll," said the detective. "I have discovered, while in the Lackaye house, that it is a useless waste of time to do so."

"I guess you are right about that, Mr. Carter," was the reply. "I have spent the whole day trying to find a few, but they are worse than looking for wild ducks in a house aquarium."

"The burglars opened a safe or two, in your house, didn't they?"

"One—yes."

"Combination?"

"No; key."

"Where was the key?"

"In the lock."

"I mean where was it before the burglars tackled the safe?"

"In the lock. It had been left there."

"Nothing very difficult or mysterious about that, was there?"

"Not very."

"How does it happen that in these progressive times you had such an old-fashioned safe as one which locks with a key, Mr. Carroll?"

"It's an heirloom; one that my grandfather owned. I am not sure that it was even locked last night. I am not sure that it has been locked in a year, in fact."

"But the jewels were in it?"

"Some of them. Others were in my wife's dressing-room. They went about the house as they were minded to do. Nobody interfered with them—not even the dog."

"By the way, what has become of the dog, Mr. Carroll?"

"I kicked him out of doors this morning. I haven't seen him since—no; it was this afternoon that I did it."

"Where did you get the dog?"

"Maxwell got him for me."

"Where?"

"From some dog-fancier he knew somewhere near Newport."

"Did you ever see the dog-fancier?"

"No; I was going with Maxwell after the dog, but something happened—I forget what it was—that prevented; so Maxwell brought the dog to me."

"You paid for him, I suppose?"

"Maxwell wouldn't even let me do that."

"So you don't know exactly where he was purchased?"

"No, I don't. Save that he was found somewhere near Newport, I know nothing about him. But Maxwell will be able to tell you as soon as he gets here."

"He won't be at home for some time, will he?"

"Yes. He will be here the day after to-morrow."

"Mr. Lackaye thought——"

"I just received a letter from Maxwell this afternoon; within the last hour. It was mailed in London, and it states that he intended to sail by the next steamer and would therefore arrive in New York the tenth; which will be the day after to-morrow."

"What steamer?"

"The *Alaria*."

"By the way, have you been in to see Mrs. Maxwell, since the robbery?"

"Yes. Have you?"

"No. We are going there when we leave you."

"She seems to be all broken up about the affair. She had no idea that either Lackaye or I had been robbed until I told her about it."

"What did *her* dog do while the robbers were in the house? Did she tell you?"

"Why, yes. It seems that there was some misapprehension about that, at first. The police to whom she reported the affair got the impression that her dog acted the same as mine and Lackaye's did; but she tells me that her dog was in her bedroom with her. She said that he growled in the night, and wakened her, but that she made him keep still, never thinking that burglars were in the house. She has kept his basket in which he sleeps in her room ever since Maxwell has been away."

"Did they love very much?"

"She doesn't know exactly because she knows nothing about the securities that were taken, but she had about a hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewels that have disappeared."

The detective was silent a moment, and then he asked:

"Mr. Carroll, I wonder if you have any ideas about this affair?"

"I don't know whether I have or not."

"The three houses were entered in about the same manner, weren't they?"

"Apparently. They came into my house by way of the front door, I think. There was no other place where they could have entered without leaving some traces of their presence—and there was no trace of them anywhere."

"And they entered Maxwell's in the same manner, didn't they?"

"Apparently."

"Isn't it also evident that they were entirely familiar with the interior arrangements of all three houses?"

"Quite so."

"How do you account for that?"

"I don't account for it at all. It is entirely beyond me. It is about as great a mystery as I ever heard of; but the greatest mystery of all, is how in the world they got into Lackaye's vault."

"I was coming to that. He claims that he is the only person who knows the combination of the vault lock."

"Yes; he told me that."

"And that he does not even keep a memorandum of it."

"He told me that, also."

"And yet the man who opened that safe door must have known the combination."

"So it would seem; still, I have heard that there are experts in the business who can open any safe in the world by sound—by placing the ear close to the dial of the combination and listening there while they turn it."

"There are such experts, Mr. Carroll. I can do that myself; but the point is that no expert has ever lived who can do it the first time trying, and sometimes they try twenty, or thirty, or even a hundred times before they catch it. I tried it on that vault door, myself."

"Did you? What was the result?"

"The result was that I am certain that nobody, no matter how expert, could have opened that vault door of Lackaye's in less than five or six hours, at least, and I doubt if it could be done in ten."

"So you don't think it was accomplished in that way?"

"I do not."

"You don't suppose that Lackaye would have done it himself, do you?"

"I had not thought of it in that way," replied the detective, smiling. "If his house had been the only one that was robbed, I might have given such an idea some thought, but under the present circumstances, I don't think I could."

"How about his having done it in his sleep, Mr. Carter?"

"That theory is open to the same objections. He would hardly come in here and rob your house and then go into Maxwell's and rob that one, also, in his sleep. And, besides, there are the doors to open, and the dogs to encounter."

"That dog business is what gets me, Carter," said Mr. Carroll.

"It is what gets me, too."

"You asked me a little bit ago if I had any ideas about the matter. I have got just one."

"What is it?"

"The man who used to own those dogs; the man from whom Maxwell procured them."

"I have thought of that; but there are objections to that theory also."

"I suppose there are; but there are also things to support it."

"What, for example?"

"The dogs were in Newport until two months ago.

The man might have kept up his acquaintance with them. We all keep extra servants in Newport; he might have gleaned all the knowledge he required through some of them; he might even have found some opportunity for procuring keys to our city houses, or impressions of those keys; and if he did that, he could have run down here in the night some time, and studied the interiors of the houses at his leisure. I think I would look up that dog fancier, Carter."

CHAPTER VII.

"NINETEEN—ONE HUNDRED—A CIPHER—AND SIX."

"Now for our last call of the series," said the detective laughingly, as he and the inspector stepped out of the house together.

"I suppose it is Mrs. Maxwell now," replied the inspector.

"Yes."

"What additional information do you contemplate discovering there, Nick?"

"None at all, old man. But I have an idea which I have not referred to, as yet."

"I could see that with half an eye."

"I will tell you about it and discuss it with you after we have made our call upon Mrs. Maxwell."

"All right, but in the meantime, Nick, I have had about all the calling I want, and if you don't mind I'll get right along down-town to my office. I'll wait for you there."

"All right."

And thus it happened that the detective made the call upon Mrs. Maxwell alone.

Before entering the house he borrowed one of the inspector's cards, which he sent to her; and she having perceived that her caller came from police headquarters, received him at once.

"It is very kind of you to come here, inspector," she said graciously, upon entering the room. "I know it must be a great trouble to you."

"I am not the inspector in person," replied Nick, rising and bowing with all the grace of a Chesterfield. "I am merely a sub officer sent here in his place. If you will permit me to introduce myself, I am Nick Carter."

He uttered the name rather abruptly, and he watched her narrowly, without appearing to do so, at the same time. And he saw—or fancied that he saw, her give a slight start.

It was almost imperceptible; so vague in fact that the detective was not sure that it was the sound of the name that affected her, for she replied at once, and with a slight elevation of her eyebrows:

"You are connected with the police, of course?"

"Certainly. I am here by the inspector's order."

"And what can I do for you?"

"I would like very much to have you supply me with a clue that would lead to the arrest of the men who robbed your house," he replied, purposely endeavoring to appear as stupid as possible.

He was studying her face and her general appearance narrowly, the while.

What he saw was a distinctively beautiful woman of medium stature and weight, with waving brown hair parted in the middle, and arranged over her brows a la Priscilla, with remarkably bright and piercing brown eyes which looked at one steadily and rather disconcertingly, with straight nose and rather large mouth and red lips behind which she frequently displayed a double row of large, even, white teeth.

Her face was unusually wide between the eyes, her complexion was perfect, and her smile was of the expansive order; but she was unquestionably a beautiful woman with a demeanor of perfect repose—as calm as a summer sea.

"You have been informed, I suppose," continued the detective, "that yours was not the only house that was robbed last night?"

"Yes; I have heard of the other robberies," she replied. "Mr. Lackaye lost a great deal, I am told."

"Yes. A considerable sum."

"Don't you regard it as a very strange affair, taken altogether, Mr. Carter?" she asked of the detective.

"I certainly do, madam. Have you any idea what time it was when the burglars entered your house?"

"I have not—unless it was at the time that Tumble—our dog, you know—growled, and awakened me."

"That was doubtless the time. What hour was it?"

"I really don't know; but I am under the impression that it was toward morning."

"What gives you that impression?"

"Again I do not know. It is only that it is my impression."

"Where was the dog?"

"In my room."

"Is he in the habit of sleeping in your room?"

"I have been having him sleep there since my husband went away. Before that his basket was in the lower hall."

"I suppose that when your husband went to Europe you thought you would be safer if you kept the dog in your room at night, eh?"

"I don't think it was timidity which induced me to move his sleeping-basket to my room," she replied slowly. "I am not a timid person, Mr. Carter."

"No; you do not impress me as one who is inclined to be timid."

"I think I took him there for company. A dog, even though he cannot talk, is great company. I was lonely, and, of course, Tumble was and is a sort of solace to me."

"Well, I can understand that."

"It growled and awakened me—but I thought nothing of it."

"I don't suppose it occurred to you that there might be burglars in the house, did it?"

"Not at all."

"What impression did his act give you?"

"I am not conscious that it gave me any at all, save that I was disturbed. I do not suppose that I was half-awakened, in reality."

"Probably not."

"He came to the side of my bed and poked his cold nose against my hand which was within his reach. It was his nose rather than the noise he made which roused me."

"Yes."

"I said to him, 'What's the matter, Tumble?' and he whined. I told him to go and lie down, but he refused, and whined again, and then I snapped my finger and ordered him to jump up on the bed."

"Where," said Nick, "I suppose he cuddled down at once and went to sleep?"

"Yes. At once."

"And in effect, you did the same?"

"Exactly."

"I don't suppose that you realized it at the time, but as soon as the dog was upon the bed, the presence of strangers in the house would cease to disturb him for the reason that he could no longer hear or smell them. It is not that a dog's hearing is so much more acute than man's that they are capable of giving us warning of the approach of strangers, it is due to the fact that they are so close to the ground or the floor."

"Yes," said Mrs. Maxwell; and smiled at the detective.

"Was that the only disturbance that occurred during the night, madam?"

"Yes."

"And none of your servants heard a sound?"

"Not one."

"You lost considerable property?"

"Nothing as compared with the losses of Mr. Lackaye."

"Still, you did lose considerable?"

"I lost nearly all my jewels, and there are missing many of Mr. Maxwell's papers. I don't know much about them, so I cannot estimate what the loss may be until he gets home."

"You are expecting him?"

"The day after to-morrow; yes."

"Where were your jewels and those papers kept, before the burglars got them?"

"In a safe in the library."

"I will ask you in a few moments to let me see it."

"Certainly. Whenever you wish."

"Does it lock with a combination or a key?"

"With a combination."

"How was it opened?"

"I could not tell you that; merely that I discovered this morning that it had been opened and that the things had been taken from it."

"The safe was not injured?"

"Not at all."

"Then it follows that the combination had been employed in opening it."

"Without doubt."

"That is, of course, if it was locked when you retired."

"Oh, I know that it was locked."

"Will you tell me why you are positive about that?"

"Because I had occasion to open it during the evening, and I, therefore, closed and locked it myself."

"I suppose your maid knows the combination?"

"She certainly does not, sir."

"Your sister-in-law, then?"

"Nobody knows the combination of that safe but my husband and myself."

"And it isn't at all likely that you would rob yourself, is it?" asked Nick, with a smile which was entirely reassuring.

"Hardly that."

"And your husband is now on the ocean."

"I suppose he is. He is due to arrive in New York the day after to-morrow by the *Alaria*."

"Was anything taken other than the contents of that safe?"

"Some silver, but not to amount to anything."

"So the burglars apparently visited only the library and the dining-room?"

"Yes, sir."

"About their entering the house? How do you suppose they got inside?"

"I can think of no other way than through the front door with a key. They must be exceedingly expert at picking locks, for Mr. Carroll tells me that they entered his house and Mr. Lackaye's in the same manner."

"Apparently that is true."

"You make use of the word 'apparently' as if you thought there might be a different method," said Mrs. Maxwell.

"Yes? There might be a method which we could not even guess, madam. Will you take me to the library now, where I can see the safe?"

She did so, and the detective was soon on his knees before it, *and there he made an exceedingly interesting discovery.*

The safe was *not* a large one; as compared to many, it would be called a small one, although it stood as high at the top as the detective's shoulders.

But it was from the same makers as the vault door

of Lackaye's house, *and the lock was an exact duplicate of that one.*

Without remark the detective closed the safe door and locked it fast; then, for some moments he appeared to work over it as if he were endeavoring to open it by sound; and he continued at that employment until the woman's curiosity was aroused and she asked:

"What are you trying to do, Mr. Carter?"

"I am trying to discover if this lock can be worked by ear, but I see that it is utterly impossible."

"Oh, yes, I think so. Quite so."

"I shall have to ask you to give me the combination so that I can open it. You will have to have it changed now, anyway, and you will place nothing more of value inside, until the combination is changed, of course. What is the combination, Mrs. Maxwell?"

She hesitated for one moment, and then she replied:

"It is 19—100—0 and 6. Nineteen, one hundred, a cipher, and six."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN AMAZING EXPERIMENT.

The detective's stay in that house was very short after that.

It has already been stated that the door of the vault in Lackaye's house was provided with a four-figure dial—that is, that it required four figures instead of the customary three to open it—and that this lock in the house of Maxwell was an exact duplicate of it.

The coincidence gave the detective an idea which was directly in progression with the other one which he had not as yet mentioned to any one; in fact, which he had barely considered with seriousness, himself.

He produced his pencil and also an envelope, and on the back of the latter he wrote down the figures:

"19—100—0—6."

Then he stood with the envelope in his hand studying what he had written, until suddenly he scribbled again on the back of the envelope:

"1906."

Then he returned the envelope and the pencil to their respective places.

"I have now one more favor to ask of you, Mrs. Maxwell," he said.

"Yes? What is it, sir?"

"I would like to interview Tumble—the dog."

"I don't suppose you expect him to *tell* you anything, do you?" she asked, with one of her expansive smiles.

"Oh, I don't know. Dogs sometimes almost talk."

"Will you tell me first what you make out of that combination?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"Apparently nothing at all," he replied.

"From the fact that you wrote it down on an envelope, I supposed that it had suggested something to you," she murmured.

He laughed pleasantly and reassuringly.

"I jotted it down for future reference," he said. "Now, may I see the dog?"

"Certainly. I will send for him."

She rang the bell, gave the order, and presently the dog was brought into the room.

He was a brindle bull-terrier, rather large for his breed, and exceptionally intelligent.

The detective could see that at a glance, because of the breadth of forehead between the eyes, and the expression of the eyes themselves.

He looked Nick over suspiciously when the detective spoke to him, but he had been well trained, and an admonitory glance from his mistress evidently warned him that this was a person with whom he was to take no liberties.

"Will you leave me alone with the dog for a moment, Mrs. Maxwell?" he asked of her.

"Why?" she demanded, in great surprise.

The detective laughed as he replied:

"Did I not just inform you that I wished to interview him? I suppose you have heard of the chap who goes to Africa and South America and other places, who lives in a cage and studies the language of monkeys? Don't you suppose that possibly I might have learned the language of dogs in something of the same manner?"

"This is hardly an occasion for joking, Mr. Carter," she replied with dignity.

"Quite true, Mrs. Maxwell. I beg your pardon."

"And, besides," she said at once, "if I should leave the room, Tumble would fly at you the instant you were alone with him."

"Then, in that case, I pray that you will not go away. I will take my departure instead."

He left his chair as he said this, and moved toward the door, but all the time he kept his eyes upon the dog as if he were admiring him.

"He is certainly a fine animal," he said. "I wish I had one like him. And that reminds me—did you know that Mr. Lackaye's dog, and Mr. Carroll's also, have disappeared?"

"Disappeared?" she asked, in surprise—or, at least, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes. They have run away or been stolen. I wonder, by the way, if your husband could not give me the address of the man from whom he got this dog, or if he could not get one like him for me?"

"I think so, Mr. Carter. I will ask him about it as soon as he returns."

"Thank you. Good afternoon, Mrs. Maxwell."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Carter. I suppose I will see you again on this matter?"

"Certainly. I will call as soon as I have anything to

repeat—and, in any case, I will call as soon as your husband returns. Let us say the day after to-morrow, in the evening."

He left her then and went out of the house.

He walked rapidly along the street to the corner where he waited a few moments, then deliberately retraced his steps, and in five minutes more was once again in the presence of Boynton Lackaye.

"What can I do for you now, Mr. Carter?" asked the millionaire as he entered the room where the detective was awaiting him.

"You can conduct me, if you will, to your office-room, where the vault is located," replied the detective.

"I have company. Could you not go alone?"

"I would prefer that you accompany me, sir. I will not detain you more than ten minutes."

"Very well. Come on."

The old man led the way to the "office-room," and as soon as they had entered it, Nick closed and locked the door, as he had done once before that afternoon.

"May I ask you to sit there for a moment, Mr. Lackaye?" said Nick, indicating a chair which stood so that it faced the door of the vault.

"Thank you; and now, will you kindly promise me that no matter what you see me do, you will keep the matter an inviolate secret until I give you permission to speak?"

"Certainly; but what——"

"You will see in a moment, if you will observe me."

"I am observing you all right, Carter."

"You perceive, do you not, that the door of the vault is closed?"

"I'm not blind."

"And that it is also locked?" The detective spun the dial rapidly around as he asked this question.

"Yes," said the millionaire. "It is locked all right."

"I locked it when I was in this room before, Mr. Lackaye. Now, I think I can open it. You have said that you are the only person alive who knows what the combination is. I think I have discovered what it is."

The millionaire sneered perceptibly.

"You might easily have made that discovery by taking the lock apart while you were in here alone, on the occasion of your former visit," he said. "You would only have to go through with the same operation we make in changing the combination to do that."

"That is quite true, Mr. Lackaye, but you know that I was not in this room long enough to have done that. It would require at least an hour, and I was not here more than fifteen minutes. I could not have done it in that time, could I?"

"No; I don't think you could."

"At all events, I did not; I did not even try to do so; in fact, I did not think of it at all. I was more interested at the time in the effort to discover if I could operate the lock by sound."

"And you found that you could not."

"Yes."

"And now you think that you have found out what the combination is?"

"I do."

"May I ask if you discovered it written in chalk on the pavement outside? Or, if it was brought to you by the burglar himself?"

"I thought you insisted that you are the only person——"

"Oh, drop all that, Carter! Of course, the burglar found out what that combination is, somehow; or he opened it by sound. I am inclined to the latter opinion."

"It would take an expert many hours to do that," said Nick, "and he would fail many times during his attempt."

"All right. If you think you can open it—do it."

The detective placed himself before the dial in such a position that his body shielded it from the millionaire's view, and then he began to turn it.

"Hold on there!" exclaimed Lackaye. "I want to see what you are at."

"And I don't want you to see anything but the result," replied Nick. "Please remain where you are."

Again he turned his back; again he busied himself with the dial, and in less than three minutes the tumblers clicked into place, Nick seized the handle and turned it, and the great door swung lazily open in response to the detective's effort.

Nick turned a smiling face toward the millionaire only to discover that the latter was staring with distended eyes and open mouth, in utter and blank amazement.

"How the devil did you do it?" he demanded at last.

"By making use of the combination which nobody knows but yourself" replied Nick, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh, rot, Carter! It begins to look to me as if everybody in town knows that combination."

"There are certainly two, now, besides yourself, who do know it; eh?"

"I guess you are right."

"And I suspect there are others, Mr. Lackaye."

"You haven't happened to see it in the personal columns of the *Herald*, have you, Carter?"

"No."

"Perhaps you won't mind telling me what it is in words, eh? Such a statement would relieve me of this present impression of jugglery, at least."

"Certainly. It is the year in which we live—*nineteen hundred and six*. That is, it is nineteen—*one hundred—a cipher—and six*."

"Well, by the great slump in Amalgamated, if you don't take the cats and calls—if you are not a wizard, I'll give away my seat on change and quit, Carter. How did you do it?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders and did not reply.

"Did you guess it?"

"We will let it go at that, Mr. Lackaye."

"I suppose you guessed it because I told you that I changed it once a year? It occurred to you that I might use the figures of the year, eh? But I swear to you that this is the only time I have ever done that."

"I have proved to you, have I not, that another than yourself might know the combination?"

"I guess there is no doubt of that."

"I am inclined to the opinion that the information has been in the possession of the man who robbed you for a considerable time, Mr. Lackaye."

"You will be telling me next that you know who robbed me."

"I do know—that is, I am reasonably certain."

"*What!*"

The detective could not repress a laugh.

"Don't get excited," he said. "I haven't a particle of proof as yet."

"*Proof!* Great Cæsar! Isn't that proof enough?" He pointed toward the vault door.

"It is proof that I can open the vault—yes. It is not proof that another can do it."

"But how did you find out *here*?"

"I am not prepared to tell you that just yet, sir. I will tell you in good time."

"I don't see——"

"And, in the meantime, I want you to give me your solemn promise that you will not tell a person, no matter whom, of my discovery, or what I have done. Don't tell Carroll; don't tell your valet, your butler, or even your wife—until I give permission. Will you promise?"

"Yes. I promise."

CHAPTER IX.

THE THREE DOG BURGLARS.

The detective went directly to his own home after he departed from the residence of the millionaire where he had amazed that individual so greatly.

"Chick," he said to his assistant, "I have run onto the most strangely interesting case I have ever known, today."

"What is it?" asked the assistant.

"That Maxwell burglary. There was something in the papers about it this afternoon and evening."

"Yes; I read what was printed. What is there that is so remarkable about it?"

"The remarkable thing," replied the detective slowly, "is the fact that three dogs are the leading factors in the robberies—for there were three burglaries instead of one."

"Three burglaries and three dogs! What in the world could dogs have to do with it?"

Nick Carter's great bloodhound, Pedro, was lying on the rug asleep at the time, and, instead of replying immediately to the question, the detective called to him.

"Pedro," he said, "come here!"

The huge animal rose slowly to his feet and obeyed, wagging his tail with pleasure at being addressed by name by his master.

"Pedro," said Nick, "sit down."

Pedro sat down.

"Shake hands, Pedro."

Pedro extended his paw solemnly.

"Pedro, I left the door open when I entered the room; close it."

Pedro stalked majestically across the room, struck the door a blow with his paw, and closed it. Then he returned to his master again.

"Now, Pedro, if you will get my hat and bring it here, I will take you for a short walk after I have finished talking with Chick," said the detective, and Pedro crossed the room to the table where Nick had carelessly thrown down his hat, secured it, brought it to his master, and then, as soon as Nick had taken it, stretched himself at the detective's feet with his head resting upon his paws, to wait until the conversation was ended.

Chick was smiling.

"I have seen all that done about a thousand times," he said, "May I ask what it has to do with the present question?"

"It has this to do with it. Pedro has practically taught himself those small tricks—if one can call them tricks. We have never made any effort to teach him such things, have we?"

"No."

"The fact that he has learned them demonstrates his intelligence, doesn't it?"

"Yes; but Pedro wasn't concerned in those robberies, was he?"

"No. But with patience, dogs can be taught almost anything. They are taught to hunt, taught to spell their own names by picking out lettered blocks, taught to respond to signs without the use of the voice—taught, in fact, things which seem incredible."

"That is true enough."

"I have discovered three dogs that have been trained in burglary."

"Is that a cold fact, Nick?"

"Absolutely so. Shall I draw the picture for you?"

"I wish you would tell me about it. It is a new one on me."

"And on me, also."

"Tell me all about it, won't you?"

"Well, the characters in our small drama are: A man, who is bright and smart and keen, and who knows all about dogs; three dogs; a pretty woman or two; and—let us say a hundred thousand dollars in cash."

"Rather a flashy capital for a burglar, isn't it?"

"Not when the game is to get a couple of millions."

"All right. Go on."

"The man has spent years in training his dogs; he has worked them down to perfection."

"Yes."

"He uses a part of his hundred thousand to rent a villa in the summer, where he can butt into the society he wants. He keeps to himself until curiosity gets the best of his neighbors and they begin to cultivate him. If he had made any advances in the first place he would have been turned down awfully hard."

"Sure."

"But the very fact that he and his wife and the other pretty woman do not seem to care a rap whether they know anybody or not, amazes and puzzles the rich neighbors, and one by one acquaintances are made, until before it is realized the three are invited everywhere."

"I am catching on. Go ahead."

"One day, after he has become rather chummy with two of his neighbors—both very rich, while he himself has posed as being beyond the need of money—one such day he returns home from a drive with a beautiful bull-terrier which he says he has purchased somewhere out on the road."

"Yes."

"The terrier is a beauty. He knows a lot of tricks. He gives every evidence of being not only a perfect watch-dog, but a perfect house dog as well. Mr. Butterin is regarded as being especially fortunate in having secured such a dog."

"I see."

"When envy concerning the dog has risen to exactly the right degree on the steam guage, he suddenly remembers that there was one, anyhow, and possibly two more dogs at the same place where he found his. He says he will find out."

"And all the while all three dogs are his own, eh?"

"Wait."

"Well?"

"The next time he goes out along that road he brings home with him a second dog which he very graciously presents to the friend who admired his own dog the most. Of course, the present is accepted, and the dog is installed in the house of the rich man."

"But I do not —"

"Wait a moment. Friend number two is now envious. Mr. Butterin and Mr. Easymark have dogs, and he has none. He expresses his regret about it, and Butterin tells him that on the morrow he will take him out to the dog-fancier and find out if there is still another dog there that can be bought.

"The morrow comes, and, somehow, the engagement is not kept; but, all the same, on the day following, Butterin returns home with still another dog, which he presents to Mr. Twiceeasy."

"So," said Chick, "the men whom you have chosen to call Easymark and Twiceeasy each have in their possession a dog which has been owned and trained by Butterin, the prospective burglar? Is that it?"

"Precisely."

"What next?"

"Just the same old trick that has been played for so long a time. Just sitting around on the lawns and smoking; just riding around in the motors; just a little golf, a little wine, a little talk—and more cordial and familiar terms with the two prospective victims."

"But the dogs——"

"The dogs have been trained to respond to certain signs. They have been trained not to recognize their real master unless they get a certain sign or a certain word. They know that severe punishment awaits them if they transgress. They have been taught, also, to be more or less friendly with people who address them by names which are not really their own. For instance, if Pedro had been taken in hand when he was a puppy, he could have been taught to answer to the name of Tom from another, and to recognize the name of Pedro only from me."

"I see."

"They are installed with their new masters; they know their business thoroughly; doubtless it is by no means the first time they have had the same work to do. They rather enjoy it, for dogs know when they are deserving of praise from their masters, just as well and just as thoroughly as men know their own possibilities."

"I thoroughly agree with that."

"Now; Mr. Butterin has previously discovered that his two prospective victims possess all the requirements for the success of his schemes. They live close together; only one residence intervenes between them, in their city homes—and both those homes are worth looting. By a stroke of great good fortune, which may be called luck rather than a part of his plans, he succeeds in renting that intervening house."

"I see; and he goes there to live, as soon as the summer resort is deserted."

"Precisely."

"What next?"

"The next move on the board is not clear in my mind, yet—but, anyhow, I haven't quite got to it."

"Well?"

"Mr. Butterin is possessed of a lot of paste jewels which look as if they were worth fortunes. He poses as a man of affairs; talks affairs; refers to his investments; makes visits at times of his two friends; purchases a safe which he has installed in the library of his city house, and in which he is supposed to keep his securities and his wife's jewels.

"He buys the safe at the same place where one of his victims has already made purchases, and he has a duplicate combination lock put on it.

"And now comes the puzzling part of the affair."

"I am waiting for that," said Chick.

"He may be as expert at picking a lock on a house door as I am; I don't know about that. If he is not he manages somehow to secure impressions in wax of the keys to the doors of the houses on either side of him.

"Then—and this is where I am stumped—he discovers a means of finding out the numbers of the combination of a vault door in the house of one of his victims. That combination is a secret which the owner of the vault holds to himself, strictly. He never reveals it—never has revealed it—to anybody. He claims that he is the only living person who possesses it.

"But, all the same, Butterin finds out what it is—*and he sets the combination of the lock of his own safe at the same identical numbers.*"

"Why should he do that?"

"That's another puzzle. Possibly to avoid forgetting it. Possibly to test the truth of his information. Possibly in irony. He does it anyhow—*and thereby supplies me with the real clue to all this mystery.*"

"It was the key to the whole thing, eh?"

"Yes; the open-sesame of the case."

"But the method by which he discovered the combination in the first place is still a mystery?"

"Yes."

"You say he is on terms of intimacy with the owner of the vault?"

"Yes. Rather so."

"Who made those locks? What firm was it?"

"Waring & Co."

"I'll go down and see them and have a look at their locks."

"All right, Chick. I wish you would."

"And in the meantime I have a suggestion."

"What is it?"

"This: If, during that intimacy, he could have managed somehow to be left alone in the room where that vault is located, at a time when the door was ajar, would it not have been possible for him to take the lock partly apart, as one would do to alter the combination? And if he could do that, would he not be able to discover the numbers at which the tumblers of the lock were set?"

CHAPTER X.

BARE-FACED JIMMY; THE GENTLEMAN CROOK.

"I am inclined to think, Chick, that you have hit upon the idea," said the detective, after a moment of silence. "Anyhow, you can go in the morning to see Waring & Co., and you can spend the forenoon studying their locks."

"I'll do it."

"Now, I want to change the subject a bit—just a little."

"Well, Nick?"

"The man to whom I have referred as Mr. Butterin, must have been a crook in the first place—that is, before he undertook this particular affair."

"Why so?"

"Because, otherwise, he wouldn't have the nerve to do it. In the second place, he wouldn't have the patience to do it: I mean, to spend years in training those dogs to assist him; and again, he would never have thought out the method at all if his mind had not been bent upon such subjects; traveling in such grooves."

"You haven't told me just yet how the dogs assisted him."

"I'll come to that presently."

"All right."

"Again, he must have originally been a man who was accustomed to good society—I mean that he was before he ever became a crook."

"That seems to be a logical conclusion."

"So we are to conclude that he is what you might call a 'gentleman crook.'"

"Yes."

"Otherwise, he could not play his part, after he had once 'butted in' among the society people."

"No."

"And the woman—or women, for there are two, although I have seen but one—must have had the same advantages."

"Sure. It would be even harder for them than for him. Women are much more discriminating in social matters than men."

"And there is still another requirement that he would have to possess."

"What is that?"

"Cash."

"Sure. And lots of it."

"He could not hope to succeed without a capital of at least a hundred thousand, most of which he would have to spend during the time at Newport while he was doing the dog act, and otherwise laying pipes for the later campaign."

"Well? He had that, of course."

"Yes; but how did he get it, Chick?"

"Stole it, probably."

"But where, lad? Don't you see that if we could recall to mind a big affair that came off somewhere in the world a year or two ago, where upward of a hundred thousand was stolen, and no trace of the thief was found, that it might be our man?"

"Yes; but as I understand you, you already know who the man is."

"So I do; but where is your proof?"

"Give it up, Nick."

"At present he is living in great style, under the name of Paran Maxwell; he is received everywhere; so is his wife and his sister—supposedly his wife and sister, at least. He is above reproach. His safe has been robbed with the others. The fact that the numbers of the combination on that safe are the same as the combination of the vault door in the adjoining house, is merely a coincidence—and one which can be readily explained, too, for the reason that it happens to be the numbers of the present anno domini. I say it with reverence. You see there is not a scintilla of proof against the man. He would laugh at us. His friends—the very men who were robbed—would do the same."

"I see the point—yes."

"Chick, that man has not always been Paran Maxwell. It isn't very long since he has been somebody else. I wouldn't wonder if he has spent a few years in prison, where he has had leisure and quiet to study this thing out."

"That's likely, too."

"Now, where in all New York—where in all the world—have we known of such a crook? Where have we come in contact with a man who possesses the qualifications to do what this fellow has done, and who is smart enough—I forgot to tell you this part of it, Chick—to have provided a perfect alibi for himself?"

"A perfect alibi?"

"One which appears to be perfect, and you can rest assured that he has neglected nothing to add to its per-

fection. He is supposed to have been in Europe, and to be on his way home now. Letters have arrived from Europe saying that he was to sail on the next steamer, and is due to arrive here on the *Alaria* the day after to-morrow."

"We might meet the steamer, Nick."

"I most certainly intend to do that—if I have not nabbed my man before it gets in. But where have you or I ever heard of a man who possesses all these possibilities, and where has there been a robbery such as I have described?"

"Give it up again. But as to the robbery, you just now suggested that the man may have been in prison while he was studying this thing out, and if that is the case, he may have had the boodle all the while, and kept it cached somewhere until he wanted it."

"Sure."

"But as to the man—that is quite another question."

The detective remained silent a moment, and then he mused aloud:

"He must have been born, and bred, and raised a gentleman. He——"

Nick Carter ceased suddenly. He struck his hand against his forehead.

"Born, and bred, and raised a gentleman," he repeated again. "By Jove, Chick! That expression is a quotation. I am using it as such. I have heard it somewhere from some man who was making a sort of confession to me. 'Born, and bred, and'——*Ah!*"

"Got it, Nick?" asked Chick, as the detective half-started to his feet, and then sank back again upon his chair.

"I don't know. But I *do* remember now where I heard that expression, and who it was who made use of it."

"Who was it?"

"Bare-faced Jimmy. Jimmy Duryea. The man who was once the husband of Nancy Nightingale—or Nan Drummond, as she was called then."*

"Do you think that he is your man?"

"Frankly, I do not."

"Why not?"

"He told me that he intended to reform—to give up the game, and I believed him. I hate to feel that it was not so."

"Still, Nick, reformed burglars are rather a rare article."

"I know that, Chick."

"Does Bare-faced Jimmy possess the other qualifications?"

"To the letter. Jimmy had a past. He was an Englishman who went to South Africa early in his career to escape from the consequences of some scrape he had gotten into. Down there he learned to be a crook. He belonged to a good family, was educated at Oxford, had been intimate in the best society in the world, and was an all around crack-a-jack."

"Then if I were you I would look up Jimmy."

"I think I will."

"The difficulty will be to get trace of him. I should think, though, that you might recognize him, if he is the man Maxwell."

"You couldn't bank on that, Chick. A man as slick as he is would not undertake a scheme of this sort unless he was prepared to meet me face to face somewhere with the positive assurance in his own mind that I would not know him. I wonder if Nancy is in town?"

"Sure she is. Playing at the Crawford Theater."

"Then I'll have a talk with Nancy before she sleeps to-night."

"What do you figure that she could tell you about him?"

"I don't know that she could tell me anything. She was Duryea's wife for two or three or four years. She probably knows a lot about him that she has never told me. You know, Jimmy married her without letting her suspect that he was a crook. When he was sent to prison she got a divorce."

"And later married Ike Smathers, the actor, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Where do you suppose the fellow Maxwell, if he is the robber——"

"*He is* the robber. You need not have any doubts about that part of it."

"Where do you suppose he is hiding at the present moment?"

"In his own home, to be sure."

"And you are rather of the opinion now, aren't you, that Jimmy is your man."

"I am, Chick. He possesses all the necessary qualifications. He is a gentleman. He is educated. He is

* The history of Nancy Nightingale can be found in Nos. 505 and 506 of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. Get them.

smart. He is afraid of nothing. He cares for no consequences. He used to boast that he always worked entirely on original lines. He is just the man who would work out a scheme of this kind with patience, and then carry it through to success, determined to retire from 'business' later, and hob-nob for the rest of his life with the very men he had robbed—only, I believed him when he said he intended to reform."

"Reform with a string tied to it, Nick. Reform after he had made his great stake. I'll bet that he had this thing in mind when he was talking to you, and that his promise was not an unqualified one."

"You are right. It was not."

"How much does he make out of this affair, do you think?"

"Something like a million and a half."

Chick whistled.

"Then you can rest assured that he already had it in mind," he said. "He had that nest-egg stowed away somewhere waiting for him, and he thought for a moment, with the qualms of remorse upon him, that possibly that would suffice for his days of reform. But he had dreamed of the millionaire scheme so long that he simply could not abandon it. He has postponed the question of reform—that is all."

"Chick, I feel that you are right. It's a cinch that Hare-faced Jimmy' Duryea and Mr. Paran Maxwell, of New York and Newport, are one and the same, indivisible and unique."

"And the thing is now to prove it."

"Yes—and I believe that Nancy can help me out."

"What was he sent to prison for at the time she got her divorce?"

"He never told me. She never told me. I never thought to inquire."

"More than likely it was the very job where he got his stake for the present affair."

"Again I think that you are right. Nancy will know something about that, anyhow."

"You will go to see her to-night?"

"I am going now, on the chance that her act at the theater may be early, and that I won't have to wait long."

"Shall I go with you?"

"No. Nancy will talk much more freely with me alone, Chick."

"All right."

And so it happened that soon after ten that night, Nick Carter stood in the wings of the theater waiting for the "Song Bird," as she was called, to finish her act—and he was warmly greeted when she did leave the stage to discover that the detective was awaiting her.

"Are you through, Nancy?" he asked her. "If you are I want to take you to supper, and I want to ask you a lot of questions which I think you can answer. Will you come with me?"

"Indeed, I will," she replied.

CHAPTER XI.

A MAGICIAN WITH DOGS.

The two talked upon indifferent subjects until they were seated together at a corner table at Sherry's; and even then the detective did not begin upon the subject that was nearest to his thoughts, until his companion had eaten heartily and the coffee had been served.

"What was it that you wished to ask me about, Nick?" she asked, then, for they were and are very great friends.

"It is a disagreeable subject to you, Nan," he replied. "But I want some information badly, which I think you can give me; and if you can do so, it will be of very great service to me."

"Then you need certainly not hesitate to ask me."

"It is about Jimmy, Nan."

"Oh!" Her face fell.

"You will not be giving him away, Nan. It is something about the past that I want to know about."

"Has he gone back to the old life, Nick?"

"I don't know; but you are asking questions instead of answering them."

"I know. What are your questions?"

"Have you ever seen or heard anything of him since——"

"No, Nick. Not since I went on the stage. Not since he gave me his promise never to molest me again."

"Nothing at all? In any shape?"

"Nothing at all in any shape or form whatever."

"Very good. Do you remember that you never told me what is was that he was sent to prison for that time when you got your divorce?"

"Did I not? I don't think I ever knew much about it."

"What was it for?"

"A bank burglary; somewhere in the northern part of the State. I don't remember the name of the place if I ever knew it. All that I do remember is that he was convicted on circumstantial evidence. There never was much proof against him for it, although, of course, he was guilty. I know that."

"But that was why he received rather a light sentence, wasn't it?"

"I suppose so." Yes."

"Four years, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember how much was stolen at that burglary, Nan?"

"A very large sum. I heard him talk of it before the robbery. I know that he expected to make a big haul, as he called it. That, you know, was the beginning of my awakening."

"Yes."

"It is a very sad memory to me, Nick?"

"I know it, Nan. Did you ever hear him say afterward how much was actually stolen?"

"Yes. About three hundred thousand dollars."

"So much. Do you know how many confederates he had?"

"No; but he never worked with more than one; oftener without any. It was his pet practise to work alone, unless he could force——"

"Unless he could force you to assist him, Nan. I know."

"Don't, Nick."

"Have you any idea what became of that money afterward?"

"None at all."

"Do you remember if any part of it was recovered?"

"I know that none of it was recovered. I heard him say so, before his trial, that they would never find it, and that he would have something to live on when he came out if they sent him up for twenty years."

"You heard him say that?"

"Yes. It was when he was pleading with me to stick to him. I had told him that I should apply for a divorce, and he did not wish me to do so."

"So when he did come out, after serving a little more than three years, he knew where to put his hands on that money, didn't he?"

"Without a doubt; only, you know, he would not have touched it for a long time. Not for two or three years at the least. He would suppose that he was shadowed. Jimmy was always very smart, Nick, and in some ways as perfect a gentleman in deportment as you ever saw in your life."

"I know that. Nan, did he ever talk to you about any big scheme that he had in view for the future? Any great big scheme?"

"Often. He used to call it his 'Play for a Million.'"

"Do you know what it was?"

"No."

"Or what form it was supposed to take?"

"No. Only, of course, is was burglary. That was his only method of stealing."

"By the way, Nan, was Jimmy fond of dogs?"

"Why, Nick, didn't you ever know that? He was a perfect magician with dogs. Dogs that would snarl at other people and bite them would lick his hands and fawn upon him. He used to buy puppies and train them to do the most wonderful tricks you can imagine. I have known him to sell one such trained dog for five hundred dollars."

"Do you know of any particular breed that was a favorite with him?"

"No. I think they were all alike to him. He used to say that bull-terriers were the easiest to train; but I don't think he liked them very much on account of their fighting. He abhorred a dog fight."

"Dog lovers always do, Nan."

"I wonder why you have asked me about the dogs, Nick?"

"Because I wished to know about them, Nan."

"Have I told you all that you want to know? Are there any more questions?"

"Just a very few."

"Please make them as few as possible."

"I will. Here is one. It isn't a very delicate one, either, but I want an answer if you can give one."

"Well?"

"During your life with him was there ever, anywhere, any woman to whom it occurs to you now that he might have gone after the separation between you was final? Was there, to your own knowledge, any woman whom he might have married since you left him?"

"Yes, there was."

"You need not tell me her name unless you wish to do so. I only want a description of her—of her general appearance."

"Her name? She has a dozen; but the one most common to her was Madge Babbington."

"And now as to her appearance, Nan?"

"She was of medium height, distinctly pretty, and at times almost beautiful. She had brown waving hair, which she always parted in the middle, and arranged so that she looked like a Puritan girl. She had large, but very regular features, very even, white teeth, which she was fond of exhibiting by constant smiling. Her face had the look of one who had never experienced a care in her life. Her hands were very white, and her fingers tapered remarkably. Her voice was rather low and musical. She would pass anywhere as a beautiful woman, and a fascinating one, too."

"Could she have made herself acceptable in good society? Did she have the education and the presence to do that?"

"Certainly. She was to the manor born. That was her graft, Nick. She was a confidence woman, and worked among the upper crust of society in London until she got to the end of her rope. After that she went to South Africa where we were—and later I suppose she came to New York, although I never saw her here."

"Was there a——"

"Wait a moment. She had a sister—or a half-sister, I believe it was. They used to work together. The sister was much older than Madge. She did the planning; she wrote letters which Madge followed up. They were a pair. Where one of them was found, the other one was never far away."

"And you have thought it possible that Jimmy might seek her out? That is, that he might have sought her out since he parted with you the last time?"

"I don't know, Nick. I haven't an idea as to that. I know that when he was angry with me because of my objections to the life we led, he used to say that he wished I was like Madge; and at such times he would add: 'With a woman like Madge, I could win the world.' Once he told me, 'When I make my "Play for a Million," I will have to get Madge to help me. You would never see it through.'"

"Thank you, Nan."

"Is that all you want to know?"

"Yes."

"Now tell me, is Jimmy in trouble again?"

"I am afraid he is, Nan. He has made his play for a million. I was certain that it was Jimmy before I talked with you, so you have not betrayed him—and I would have got the man anyhow, even if it were not Jimmy, so possibly you have done him good instead of harm in talking about him."

The detective took her home soon after that, and then he hastened to his own house, where he lost no time in getting into bed; but not until he had written a letter and despatched it by a messenger to the home of the inspector, of whom he requested that he would be on hand early in the morning, prepared to accompany him to make the arrest for the burglaries already described.

In the morning he partook of an early breakfast, and at eight o'clock he and Chick walked in at police headquarters, where they found the inspector with one of his sergeants ready to accompany them.

"You don't mean to tell me, Nick, that you are ready to make an arrest?" said the inspector.

"Just that. The burglar is Paran Maxwell," was the reply.

"But how is that possible? He is——"

"He is at this moment, I verily believe, at his own place of residence. I don't believe that he has been across the water at all. The letters that were received here, apparently from him, he probably sent to some friend over there to mail for him."

Then the detective related all that had occurred since he parted with the inspector, only he was careful to make no mention of Nancy's name in connection with the information he had at hand.

"There is the case," he said, in conclusion. "The only out about it is that we don't know how he managed to possess himself of the combination of the vault door. Chick was intending to visit the makers of the lock this morning, but we don't need that information now. All we want is Bare-faced Jimmy himself."

"Right you are, Nick. How do you propose to get him?"

"By going directly to the house."

"Jimmy will be likely to make a fight of it, won't he?"

"He is sure to do that. But all that I want you to do is to stay outside the house with Chick and your sergeant, and see to it that he does not escape. I shall go into the house alone. It is the only way in which we can hope to succeed."

"All right."

"You must keep out of sight until I have been inside

the house about five minutes. Then close up and await developments."

"Shall we go now?"

"Yes. Everything is ready."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MAN IN THE TOP FLOOR REAR.

The butler admitted the detective to the home of the Maxwells.

"Will you tell your mistress," he said to that functionary, "that I regret the necessity for disturbing her at such an early hour, but as I am about to make an arrest in connection with the burglary in this house and others, I wish to see her before doing so. Say that it is of great importance."

The butler bowed and withdrew, and after that there was a long wait, which was finally terminated by the sound of rustling skirts, and the sudden apparition of Mrs. Maxwell in the open doorway of the library.

"Smockton tells me that you have caught the burglar, Mr. Carter," she said, advancing toward him across the room.

"Well," replied the detective, "we haven't exactly caught him, but we expect to have him very soon. I have some very direct information concerning him and a woman who works with him, which I think is conclusive."

He met her half-way in the room while he was talking, and now within easy reach of her he straightened himself suddenly and looked straight beyond her, as if some person had entered the room behind her.

His ruse had the desired effect, for, perceiving him, she wheeled to discover who it was that had dared to intrude upon them; and the instant that she did so, he seized her.

It was the work of an instant to draw her arms behind her and to snap handcuffs upon her wrists; and then, before she could cry out to give an alarm, he had covered her mouth with one hand, while with the other he used a handkerchief, which he had brought with him for the purpose of stopping her powers of speech.

She struggled at first, but now, perceiving that she was powerless as well as speechless, she ceased, and the detective opened a door from the library into an adjoining room and led her into it, reclosing the door after him.

"You are Madge Babbington—or possibly Mrs. Dar-

yea," he said to her then. "You cannot reply to me, and it is not necessary that you should do so. Bare-faced Jimmy and your sister—not his, by the way—are somewhere in the house now. It will take me some moments to make the other arrests, so in the meantime I am under the necessity of fastening you."

He accomplished this by deftly seating her upon the floor with her back against the leg of a piano, and by releasing one handcuff long enough to pass the chain of it around the piano leg. So situated she could neither escape nor rise to her feet; nor could she cry out.

He left her then without a backward glance, and, returning to the library, he summoned the butler.

"Smockton," he said, when the butler came, "turn about and tell me who that is who followed you into the room."

The butler turned, and was seized as his mistress had been, only Nick did not handle him so gently.

"If you give the least peep of an alarm," he said in the man's ear, "it will be the last you will ever utter." He wheeled him around then and forced him into a chair.

"Where is your master?" he asked.

"He is in Eur——"

"None of that, Smockton, which isn't your name, of course. He is in one of the rooms of this house. Which one?"

"Top floor rear, sir," was the instant reply.

"Are there any servants in this part of the house at the present time?"

"No, sir. Not one, sir."

"Is anybody with your master in his room?"

"No; he is alone. He has only just dressed. His breakfast is being prepared for him now."

"It has not been taken to him yet?"

"No."

"Who takes it?"

"I do. One of the servants brings it to the dining-room and touches my bell—there it is now; did you hear it?"

"Yes. I will take the breakfast to him this morning for you. Who else is in the house?"

"Only Miss Maxwell, sir; Mr. Maxwell's sister."

"Where is she?"

"In bed. She never rises before noon."

"Where is her room?"

"On the next floor, sir. At the rear; in the corner, fronting on the side street."

"Very good. Do the servants generally know of the presence of the master in the house?"

"Only myself, sir."

"How do you account for the meals that are brought up here?"

"They are supposed to be for me, while in reality I get my meals out, and am paid extra for it."

"I see. And why do you suppose your master is hiding?"

"Some man has threatened to kill him, and he is in hiding until that man leaves the city."

"Very simple, isn't it? Now, Smockton, I am going to remove these irons and then conduct you to the front door. If anybody stops you after you leave the house, you will do as they tell you to do until I arrive on the scene. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

A moment later, after one more glance into the music-room to see that "Mrs. Maxwell" was all right, Nick slowly ascended the stairs with the tray of breakfast things in his hands.

Arrived at the top floor he made his way along the hall to the door described by Smockton, where he tapped timidly against the panel.

"Come in!" called a voice; and the detective smiled broadly, for it was unmistakably the voice of James Duryea, the gentleman crook.

He pushed the door open—wide open—and entered, with the tray still in front of him.

"Good morning, Jimmy," he said, calmly. "I thought I would bring your breakfast to you myself this morning. How are you?"

Duryea had given one convulsive start at Nick Carter's unexpected appearance on the scene, but had subsided into his chair again—or rather half upon it—while the detective was talking; and now he replied with chilling calmness:

"Hello, Carter! That you? Where did you drop from? Well, well, this *is* a surprise!"

"Yes. I rather supposed it might be. I thought I would call around, Jimmy, and ask you how that reformation business was progressing; eh?"

"I had to postpone it, Carter. I did, really. I meant it when I said it; but I had been too long a time planning this coup, you see. I couldn't give it up in a minute."

"And it wasn't a coup, after all, was it?"

"No. I say, Carter, how did you manage to nail me?"

"Just the usual way, Jimmy. Heads I win and tails you loose, you know. Too bad that you postponed that reform business, Jimmy."

"So it is. I suppose you are after me, aren't you?"

"Sure thing, Jimmy."

Nick had been standing all this time with the tray in his hands, really admiring the coolness and effrontery of Jimmy Duryea; but now there came a sudden change in the scene.

With a motion that was as quick as thought, and as if he were set upon steel springs which suddenly acted, Bare-faced Jimmy leaped to his feet, and with another motion that was equally quick, he kicked the tray of dishes and food from Nick Carter's hands.

Instantly the chops, French fried potatoes, muffins, coffee, spoons, and dishes were sent flying through the air, much of the contents being spilled over the detective; and with the same instant, Duryea himself sought to leap past the detective and gain the doorway.

But if he was quick, so was Nick Carter.

He had more than half-expected some such move as this, and although he was not exactly prepared for it, he was not as greatly taken off his guard as he might have been.

As Jimmy sought to pass him, Nick whirled and caught him in the middle of the back with his foot, and so sent him spinning against the wall near the door.

He followed this up by leaping toward the burglar; but Jimmy had already turned, and thus met him halfway.

On the instant, too, he had drawn a revolver, and as Nick seized him, he pressed the muzzle of it against the detective's stomach and called out:

"Carter, you saved my life once. I don't want to kill you. Give me three minutes. That's all I ask."

For reply Nick sought to throw him to the floor—and Jimmy pulled the trigger.

But the hammer snapped against the cartridge without exploding it, and in another moment the "gentleman burglar" found himself lying flat upon his back on the floor, with the detective's knee upon his chest and the detective's fingers at his throat.

"Give up, Jimmy?" said Nick. "Or shall I choke you a little?"

"I'm through. I won't make another struggle, Carter."

"Give me your word?"

"Yes."

"All right. Get up."

Jimmy rose slowly to his feet and stood for a moment brushing his ruffled clothing with his hands. Then he said:

"Confound you, Carter! I wish you weren't so blooming ready to take my word. I like to keep it."

"All right, Jimmy. I know you'll keep it when you've passed it. But I wish you would tell me how you got wise to that combination of the vault door."

"Oh, that? It was dead easy. I went in there to call one day and found old Lackaye sound asleep in his office-room. I gave him a little chloroform to keep him so for awhile. The vault door was open, and you know the rest. After awhile I awakened him, and he supposed I had just come in."

"Why didn't you pinch the contents of the safe, then?"

"Because it was known that I was in the house. The servants knew it."

"And what have you done with those two dogs that you stole back yesterday? Eh?"

"They are here in the house. Say, I'll make you a present of them while I'm away, Carter."

"Thanks, awfully."

"Say, Carter, I wish you'd try to go easy with my wife and her sister, will you?"

"Oh, well, we'll see what can be done later. Just now the inspector is waiting outside the house, and I think I'll let him in. Come along down, Jimmy, and I'll introduce you."

And Bare-faced Jimmy, the gentleman crook, went.

THE END.

The next issue in this series, No. 508, will be "The Gentleman Crook's Last Act; or, Nick Carter and the Haunted House."

ABOUT THE EARLY NUMBERS OF THE

TIP TOP WEEKLY

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print. We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 180 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays." We give herewith a complete list of all stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a new colored catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

MEDAL LIBRARY

No.
180—Frank Merriwell's Schooldays.
167—Frank Merriwell's Chums.
178—Frank Merriwell's Foes.
184—Frank Merriwell's Trip West.
189—Frank Merriwell Down South.
193—Frank Merriwell's Bravery.
197—Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.
201—Frank Merriwell in Europe.
205—Frank Merriwell at Yale.
209—Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.
213—Frank Merriwell's Races.
217—Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.
225—Frank Merriwell's Courage.
229—Frank Merriwell's Daring.
233—Frank Merriwell's Athletes.
237—Frank Merriwell's Skill.
240—Frank Merriwell's Champions.
244—Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.
247—Frank Merriwell's Secret.
251—Frank Merriwell's Danger.
254—Frank Merriwell's Loyalty.
258—Frank Merriwell in Camp.
262—Frank Merriwell's Vacation.
267—Frank Merriwell's Cruise.

MEDAL LIBRARY

No.
271—Frank Merriwell's Chase.
276—Frank Merriwell in Maine.
280—Frank Merriwell's Struggle.
284—Frank Merriwell's First Job.
288—Frank Merriwell's Opportunity.
292—Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.
296—Frank Merriwell's Protégé.
300—Frank Merriwell on the Road.
304—Frank Merriwell's Own Company.
308—Frank Merriwell's Fame.
312—Frank Merriwell's Co[illegible]Chums.
316—Frank Merriwell's Problem.
320—Frank Merriwell's Fortune.
324—Frank Merriwell's New Comedian.
328—Frank Merriwell's Prosperity.
332—Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.
336—Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.
340—Frank Merriwell in England.
344—Frank Merriwell on the Boulevards.
348—Frank Merriwell's Duel.
352—Frank Merriwell's Double Shot.
356—Frank Merriwell's Baseball Victories.
359—Frank Merriwell's Confidence.
362—Frank Merriwell's Auto.
365—Frank Merriwell's Fun.

The Price of the Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

The Nick Carter Weekly

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY. **HANDSOMEST COLORED COVERS**

No other detective library contains stories that are half so interesting. Nick Carter has been all over the world and has had experience with all kinds of criminals.

That's why, boys, his adventures holds one's interest from cover to cover. There is no brutality in Nick's make-up—he does not need it—he uses his wits. Do not fail to get the latest number from your newsdealer.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, by the publishers to any address upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

483—Nick Carter's Murder Problem; or, A Hide-and-Seek Game with the Dead.
484—A Battle Among the Clouds; or, Nick Carter's Criminal Client.
485—The Veiled Princess; or, Nick Carter's Secret Accomplishment.
486—The Conquest of a Kingdom; or, Nick Carter's Fight for a Throne.
487—The House of Skeletons; or, Nick Carter's Greatest Find.
488—A Queen of Inferno; or, Nick Carter's Giant Foes.
489—Nick Carter's Foxy Adversary; or, The Lures of the Bird of Paradise.
490—Three Times In Peril; or, Nick Carter's Busiest Night.
491—The Gold Lettered Dagger; or, Nick Carter's Most Tragic Case.
492—That Mysterious Affair; or, Chick's Wonderful Twelve Hours Work.
493—A Dead Guardian of Millions; or, Nick Carter Uncovers a Mystery.
494—The Mysterious Treasure Hunters; or, Nick Carter's Bargain With a Crook.
495—The Klondike Bank Puzzle; or, Nick Carter's Narrow Escape.
496—The "Bad Man" of Nome; or, Nick Carter's Hunt in Alaska.
497—The Black Flag of Piracy; or, Nick Carter's Daring Rescue.
498—Following An Ocean Trail; or, Nick Carter's Chase After Pirates.
499—A Clue From the Clouds; or, Nick Carter's Mysterious Evidence.
500—Praxatel, of the Ironarm; or, Nick Carter Follows an Open Trail.
501—The Man From Montana; or, Nick Carter and the Cavern of Gold.
502—Ismalla, the Chieftain; or, Nick Carter Among the Barbarians.
503—Nick Carter's Earthquake Clue; or, Amidst Falling Walls.
504—Nick Carter Among the Bad Men; or, The Mystery of Injun Pete.
505—The Man of Many Faces; or, Nick Carter Behind the Scenes.
506—A Letter From the Dead; or, Nick Carter's Proudest Moment.
507—Bare-faced Jimmy, the Gentleman Crook; or, Nick Carter's Amazing Experiment.
508—The Gentleman Crook's Last Act; or, Nick Carter and the Haunted House.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 100

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

..... copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
..... copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " ROUGH RIDER Nos.....

Name ..... Street and No. ..... Town ..... State .....

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY — **HANDSOME COLORED COVERS**

Never has Burt L. Standish written such interesting tales of the adventures of the Merriwell brothers, Frank and Dick, as are now appearing in this weekly. Mr. Standish has a world-wide circle of friends and he is putting forth his best efforts to amuse and entertain them. Boys, you have no idea of what a grand feast he is preparing for you. Tip Top's stories are going to astonish you. Do not fail to get it.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

516—Dick Merriwell's Discernment; or, The Heroism of a Coward.
517—Dick Merriwell's Friendly Hand; or, The Boy Who Was Saved.
518—Frank Merriwell's New Boy; or, The Folly of Dale Sparkfair.
519—Frank Merriwell's Mode; or, Winning the Confidence of a Wild Lad.
520—Frank Merriwell's Aids; or "The Secret Order of Scalp-Lifters."
521—Dick Merriwell's Visit; or, Hot Times at Farnham Hall.
522—Dick Merriwell's Retaliation; or, Fardale Against Farnham Hall.
523—Dick Merriwell's Rival; or, Dale Sparkfair at Fardale.
524—Frank Merriwell's Young Crew; or, The Mystery of the Boat-house.
525—Frank Merriwell's Fast Nine; or, Champions of the County.
526—Frank Merriwell's Athletic-field; or, The Great Meet at Bloomfield.
527—Dick Merriwell's Reprisal; or, The Clash of the Champions.
528—Dick Merriwell Dared; or, The Grapple at Wellsburg.
529—Dick Merriwell's Dismay; or, The Departure of June.
530—Frank Merriwell's Son; or, The Mark of the Star.
531—Frank Merriwell's Old Flock; or, The Reunion at Merry House.
532—Frank Merriwell's House-Party; or, The Rustle with the Rovers.
533—Dick Merriwell's Summer Team; or, Baseball in the Blue Hills.
534—Dick Merriwell's Demand; or, The Draw at Madawaska.
535—Dick Merriwell's Slabmate; or, The Boy from Bloomfield.
536—Frank Merriwell's Summer Camp; or, The Athletic-school in the Woods.
537—Frank Merriwell's Proposal; or, Starting the Sport in the League.
538—Frank Merriwell's Spook-hunters; or, The Mysterious Island of Mad Lake.
539—Dick Merriwell's Check; or, The Hot Bunch From Happy Camp.
540—Dick Merriwell's Sacrifice; or, Team Work That Told.
541—Dick Merriwell's Heart; or, Breaking the Hard Luck Streak.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

.....190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP	Nos.....	.....copies of BUFFALO BILL	Nos.....
..... " "NICK CARTER	Nos.....	..... " "BRAVE AND BOLD	Nos.....
..... " "DIAMOND DICK	Nos.....	..... " "ROUGH RIDER	Nos.....

Name.....

Street and No.....

Town.....

State.....

THE ROUGH RIDER WEEKLY

ISSUED EVERY MONDAY. **HANDSOME COLORED COVER**

Ted Strong wants to make your acquaintance, boys, and we are convinced that you will be proud to have him as a friend. The tales of his adventures among the cowboys are full of fascinating interest. He is known to every one as "King of the Wild West" and he upholds the title.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, by the publishers upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

104—King of the Wild West's Guard; or, Stella's Long Shot.
105—King of the Wild West's Posse; or, Stella's Own Vigilance Committee.
106—King of the Wild West Underground; or, Stella to the Rescue.
107—King of the Wild West's Brand; or, How Stella Held the Fort.
108—King of the Wild West's Campaign; or, How Stella Won the Victory.
109—King of the Wild West's Booty; or, Stella Finds the Pirate Loot.
110—King of the Wild West's Success; or, Stella and the Marked Bill.
111—King of the Wild West's Daring; or, Stella's Great Lariat Throw.
112—King of the Wild West's Key; or, Stella in the Hidden Vault.
113—King of the Wild West's "Hassayamper"; or, Stella in the Death Cavern.
114—King of the Wild West's Strength; or, Stella on the Cattle Ranch.
115—King of the Wild West's Danger; or, Stella among the Hopis.
116—King of the Wild West's Gulch Diggings; or, Stella's Star Rôle.
117—King of the Wild West's Motor-Car; or, Stella Fosdick's Peril.
118—King of the Wild West's Duty; or, Stella Cast Away in the Wilderness.
119—King of the Wild West's Wild-Goose Band; or, Stella's Long Flight.
120—King of the Wild West's Galleon; or, Stella's Spanish Treasure.
121—King of the Wild West's Fire Fight; or, Stella in the Burning Forest.
122—King of the Wild West's Bluff; or, How Stella Saved the Day.
123—King of the Wild West's Nerve; or, Stella in the Saddle.
124—King of the Wild West's Helping Hand; or, Stella, the Girl Range-rider.
125—King of the Wild West's Buckskin Guide; or, Stella at the Grand Round-up.
126—King of the Wild West's Strategy; or, Stella's Trick Pony.
127—King of the Wild West's Tangled Trail; or, The Disappearance of Stella.
128—King of the Wild West's Long Ride; or, Stella Lost on the Red Mesa.
129—King of the Wild West's Phantom; or, Stella in Danger.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blanks and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " ROUGH RIDER Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY. **BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS**

Buffalo Bill wins his way into the heart of every one who reads these strong stories of stirring adventure on the wide prairies of the West.

Boys, if you want tales of the West that are drawn true to life, do not pass these by.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, by the publishers to any address upon receipt of price in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES:

255—Buffalo Bill's Worst Foe; or, The Black Panther of the Sioux.
256—Buffalo Bill On a Desert Trail; or, The Mystery of the Mojave.
257—Buffalo Bill's Rio Grande Feud; or, The Giant of the Apaches.
258—Buffalo Bill in Tight Quarters; or, The Ruse of the Jumping Tarantula.
259—Buffalo Bill's Daring Rescue; or, Hunted by Wolves.
260—Buffalo Bill at the Torture Stake; or, A Close Call Among the Utes.
261—Buffalo Bill's Treasure Train; or, The Doom of the False Guide.
262—Buffalo Bill Among the Blackfeet; or, The Wizard of the Wind River Mountains.
263—Buffalo Bill's Border Beagles; or, The Trail of Gold and Death.
264—Buffalo Bill and the Bandits in Black; or, The Wild Riders of the Wilderness.
265—Buffalo Bill and the Indian Tiger; or, The Leap for Life.
266—Buffalo Bill on the Deadwood Trail; or, Cat-Eye, the Sioux Renegade.
267—Buffalo Bill in the Cañon of Death; or, Ringed In by Navajos.
268—Buffalo Bill and Billy the Kid; or, The Desperadoes of Apache Land.
269—Buffalo Bill and the Robber Ranch King; or, The White Tarantula of Texas.
270—Buffalo Bill in the Land of Wonders; or, The Mad Chief of the Madocs.
271—Buffalo Bill and the Traitor Soldier; or, Fair Inez, the Pearl of the Post.
272—Buffalo Bill's Dusky Trailers; or, The Bandits at Bay.
273—Buffalo Bill's Diamond Mine; or, The Bedouins of the Plains.
274—Buffalo Bill and the Pawnee Serpent; or, The Vendetta of Death.
275—Buffalo Bill's Scarlet Hand; or, The Accusing Blood Stain.
276—Buffalo Bill Running the Gantlet; or, The Wolves of the Emigrant Trail.
277—Buffalo Bill's Leap in the Dark; or, The Outcast of Santibell.
278—Buffalo Bill's Daring Plunge; or, The Grisly Ghost of Mahoe.
279—Buffalo Bill's Desperate Mission; or, The Round-up in Hidden Valley.
280—Buffalo Bill's Ghost Raid; or, Hot Times at Bubble Pricking.
281—Buffalo Bill's Traitor Guide; or, The Vengeance of Alkali Pete.
282—Buffalo Bill's Camp-fires; or, The Bad Man of Snake River Crossing.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. 190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of TIP TOP Nos.....
..... " " NICK CARTER Nos.....
..... " " DIAMOND DICK Nos.....
.....copies of BUFFALO BILL Nos.....
..... " " BRAVE AND BOLD Nos.....
..... " " ROUGH RIDER Nos.....

Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....

THE FAVORITE LIST
OF FIVE-CENT LIBRARIES

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest sleuth that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful, power of fascination.

MIGHT AND MAIN

These are stories of the adventures of boys who succeeded in climbing the ladder of fame by honest effort. No more interesting tales can be imagined. Each number is at least one-third longer than the ordinary five-cent library.

DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY

The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

ROUGH RIDER WEEKLY

Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title.

BRAVE AND BOLD

Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

BOWERY BOY LIBRARY

The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY

Boys, Frank Merriwell has opened a school of physical development. He has gathered all of his old-time comrades about him and their adventures are wonderfully interesting. These are certainly the best tales of athletic adventure.